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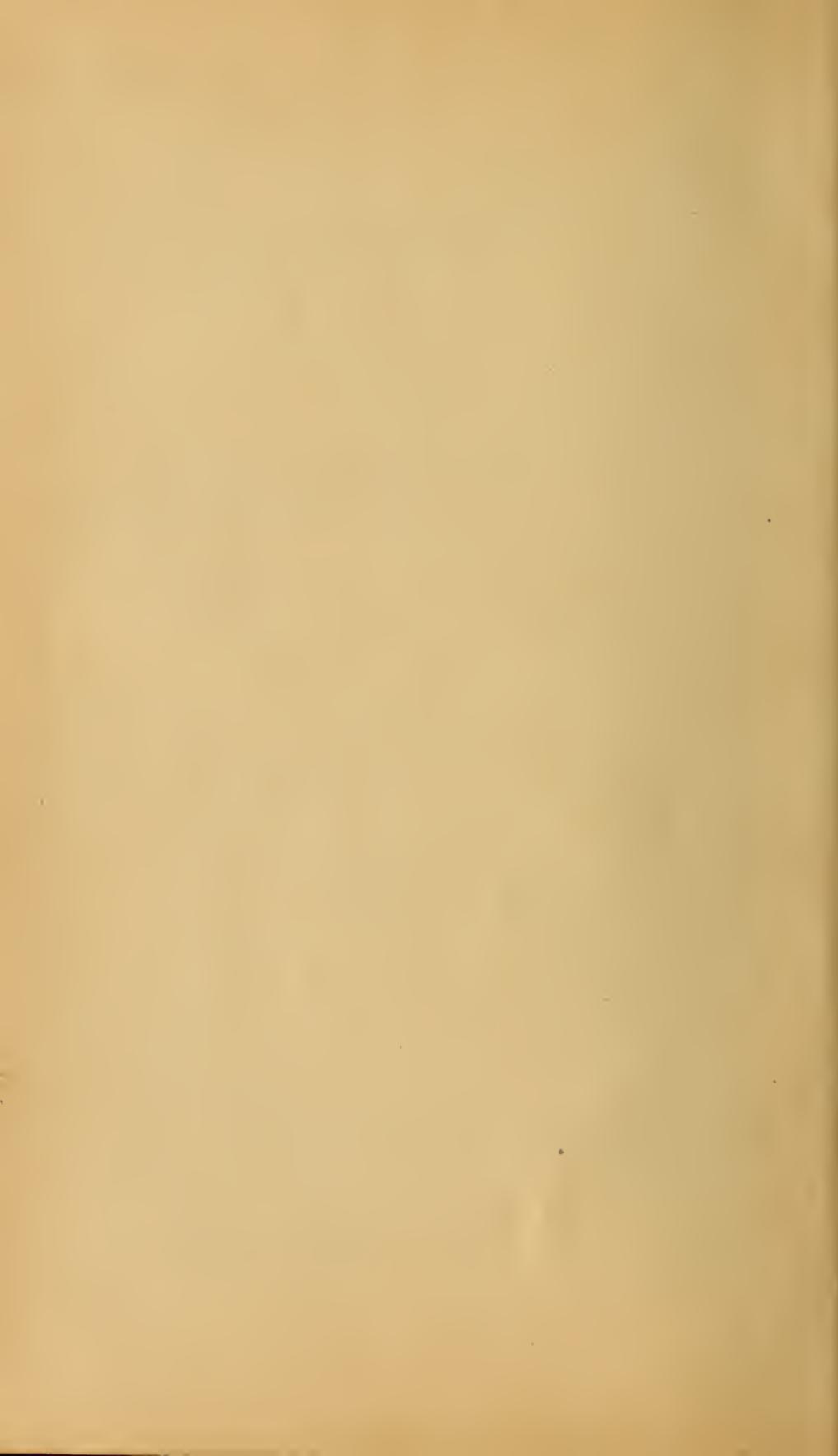
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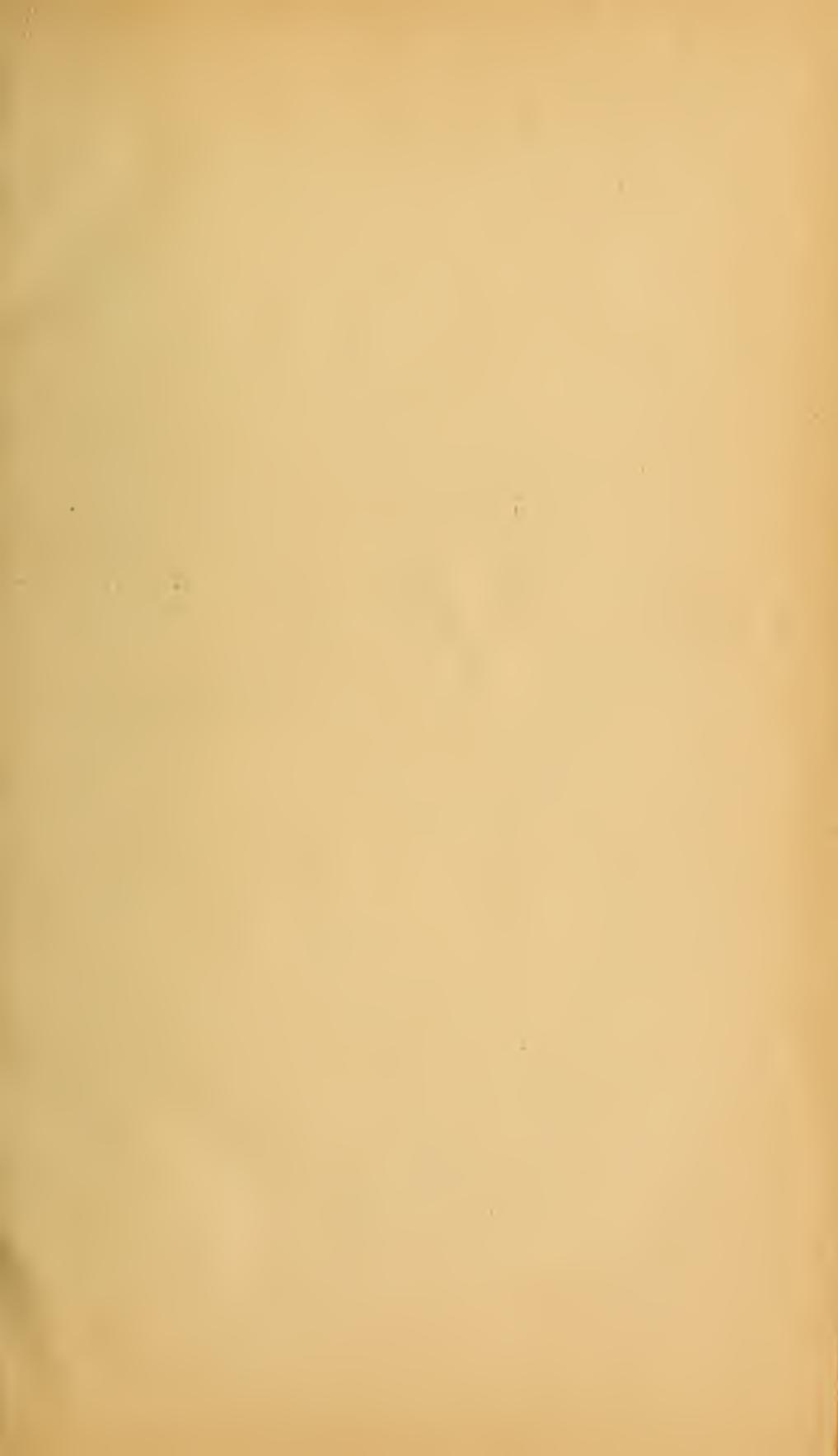
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.













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VINDICATION

OF

The True God

AGAINST

The God of Moses.

BY

GEORGE E. KING.  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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“FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order” a large number of miracles, which are *alleged* to have occurred during the last thirty-five or forty centuries, and which are more or less believed, “it has seemed good to me also,” being an old man, to examine *carefully* the evidence on which those allegations are founded, *with no other possible desire but to get at the TRUTH*, and “to write unto thee, Most Excellent” Public, the result of my investigation, “in order that thou mightest know,” *to a certainty*, whether to believe them or not.

G. E. K.

VINDICATION OF THE TRUE GOD  
AGAINST  
THE GOD OF MOSES.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TRUE GOD.

THERE is a God, and “that there is, all Nature cries aloud through all her works.” Everything in the universe shows design as clearly as the watch, the steam engine, or any other machine made by man. The whole animal kingdom, including man, is but diversified machinery, most cunningly designed and most wonderfully constructed. It matters *not* whether these machines were made at once and complete by a single fiat of Almighty Power, or whether they have been gradually evolved from infinitesimal atoms or drops of protoplasm through a long series of ages. Each and every one of those original atoms must have been created, and each must have followed the original impulse of its creator until his original design was

accomplished. The design is still there, quite manifest. This clearly proves the existence of a designer, a great first cause; and it is of no consequence what name we give it, whether Jehovah, Theos, Jupiter, or God. It all amounts to the same thing. The fact of his existence is established.

As to the form, mode or manner of his existence, or of what or how composed, it is utterly impossible for us to know anything whatever. In this respect, notwithstanding all that has been said and written on the subject, he always has and still does keep himself most effectually and wholly hidden and concealed. In that beautiful poem of Job it is averred, "Touching the Almighty we cannot find him out." And in another place the question is asked in a way that furnishes its own answer, "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?" The fact is as true now as when that poem was written. We cannot find out the Almighty to perfection. The most we can do is, *only* to reason on the subject, and this is what I now propose to do.

It is generally assumed and conceded that God is a spirit, something intangible and unseeable by human senses; and this seems to be the most rational and plausible conclusion we can think of. It may be difficult for the human mind to

have any definite conception as to what a spirit is ; an entity wholly devoid of materiality. We are somewhat familiar, however, with the great powers of Nature, which, so far as we yet know, have of themselves no materiality. Such are light, heat and electricity. We know considerable about them and of their power, but what we know may be only as an *alphabet* or first rudiments as compared with the great book that remains to be written about them. But the mind may now use them as a ladder to climb up to some faint idea or conception of that all-creating and all-controlling spirit that we call God. It may not be absurd to suppose even that he, in fact, has a material body, composed of the most highly refined essence of matter, still more subtle than light, heat or electricity ; or even that these very powers themselves are integral and component parts of himself.

And it is possible that myriads of other spiritual beings, infinitely inferior and of different grades, may exist. Nor is it impossible that the souls of men, after they leave the body, may become just such or similar beings.

As a necessary consequence and result of his existence, this Great Being must have something corresponding to the idea of dimension, at least, as to extent ; for he must be everywhere present at one and the same time. Let us consider this. Take the most powerful telescope, turn it to the

north, and view the most distant region of stars within its scope, then turn it gradually through all the points of the compass, and do the same until you come to the point of beginning. You have compassed a most inconceivably vast space; a space so vast that light, which travels 12,000,000 of miles a minute, would require many years to cross it; and yet you have not discovered the limits of creation, but on the contrary at every point you have seen convincing proof that there is much more *beyond*. And yet God must be at one and the same time at each and every point in this vast space, constantly and continually present as really as he is here with us. He must pervade and permeate every point and particle in this vast dominion. Who can comprehend, what mind can conceive, any adequate idea of a being of such immensity? Is this the God which Moses says he saw from a cleft in a rock?

But consider his power. He it is who upholds, governs and controls the millions upon millions of stars in the universe, whirling with inconceivable velocity through space, and yet so as not to interfere with each other. He has implanted in matter the property or quality of attraction by which he counterbalances world with world, and system with system, holding every one in its proper place and all in harmonious action. And what are those shining spots called stars? Are

they mere toys, childish playthings, glittering jewels, as Moses supposed they were, set in a solid firmament? What strange notions have been entertained in regard to them. Even the great and so-called inspired Evangelist evidently regarded them as insignificant trifles as compared with this world; that a good wind might shake them all down upon the earth as the untimely fruit of a fig tree, (Rev. vi: 13) implying that they might all be gathered in a few heaps in a farmer's orchard. An idea infinitely less worthy of the subject and by far less poetical than that of some genius who described them as "gimlet holes to let glory through." Until quite recent times the earth has been considered as the only body of matter in the universe that was of much consequence, and that all the stars were made only to give light to it, and for man to look at and admire as he would jewels or fireworks. That aside from this they were useless motes in the Ethereal Blue—mere tawdry spangles on the curtain of night. What horror was aroused in the religious world as late as the 17th century, when astronomy suggested that the *earth moved*—that it revolved around the sun. It seemed to upset the empire of God, and all their long-cherished doctrines and theories. But nevertheless, science established the fact.

And science has also established the fact that

all these millions of stars that stud the heavens are suns like our sun—many of them immensely larger, and all emitting original light and heat. And it is not to be presumed that they or any of them are useless bodies, mere ornaments, baubles without design, and serving no purpose. On the contrary, it is only reasonable to suppose that each one, like our sun, has a system of planets revolving around it, to which it furnishes its genial light and heat. Then what a mighty family of planets: figures could hardly express the number. As compared with them, this little globule we inhabit is less than the point of a cambric needle, the merest atom. And can it be supposed that this little atom is the only one in God's great universe that is inhabited by intellectual beings? On the contrary, the inference is incontestable, that all these planets are inhabited by intellectual beings, many more or less like man, some perhaps inferior and some perhaps vastly superior. It is not necessary to suppose that all are created just like man either, with like or even similar physical organizations; or even that all require air and food to sustain life; or that any certain degree of temperature is necessary. It is within the power of God to create living beings with bodies and natures adapted to the planets on which he places them. Then what a —. No language can express the immensity of this circle of intellectual

beings, or the number of worlds they inhabit. What shall we say, then? Is this the only world, and man the only being, that God cares for or pays any particular attention to? Well may we exclaim with the sweet singer of Israel, who was but an infant in knowledge of the works of God, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, what is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man that thou visitest him?" What would David have thought and said, if he had known all that modern science has since revealed? Is it possible that this God lived over thirty years on this little speck of earth, in a human body, under the name of Jesus, and never intimated anything about the vast extent of his dominion, or about the inhabitants of any of his other worlds?"

But let us contemplate the power of God more minutely. What he has done in other worlds and other systems can be affirmed only as deductions of reason, of which we can have no absolute knowledge. But let us see what he has done for us, and we may presume that he has done the same or something like in all other worlds. He has generated light and heat. He has diversified our little planet with oceans, lakes, rivers, mountains, hills and plains; has clothed it with verdure and adorned it with flowers. He shapes every

tree and plant, tints the blossoms with beauty, and gives them their pleasing perfumes. He grows and ripens our fruits and our grains. He takes up moisture from oceans, lakes and rivers by invisible particles, and with them forms clouds, and by his winds drives them out to refresh and gladden the land. He has probably done and is doing like wonderful things in millions of other worlds.

He has devised and constructed the frame-work of various animals, including man and beasts, birds, fishes, reptiles, and insects ; provided them with pliable joints, bound them together with cartilage and tendons, and clothed them with flesh and muscles filled with fibers and nerves ; provided within them a wonderful complication of machinery, well supplied with self-made chemicals for the reduction and assimilation of food, and extracting from it proper nutrition, and clearing it of all deleterious properties. Add to this the respiratory laboratory for vivifying and giving it the finishing touch to prepare it to become flesh, to supply and renew every part of the ever-wasting body. He has also endowed them with life and the power of locomotion, and above all has implanted within them grades of intelligence—mental capacity to enable them to look out for and take care of themselves. He has placed in the head of man a vastly superior mechanism, which

enables him to think and reason, and appreciate and enjoy intellectual pleasures. A great deal more than this is claimed for man. It is a favorite belief with many, that God has given to man an immortal soul that will survive the body, and live independent of it, to all eternity. If this be so, then let it be considered as among his mightiest works, and his crowning glory.

Let us also consider (as Dr. Watts says) "the way he works, his wonders to perform." The farmer goes to his field, plows it, scatters there a quantity of dry seeds, and buries them in the earth. After awhile he goes out again and reaps a harvest, which is required for his sustenance, without thinking of the wonderful process that has been gone through with to accomplish such a result. If we should visit some of those fields, we might find growing there side by side in the same soil different kinds of grain ; they may be wheat, rye, and barley. To an unpracticed eye they are not very dissimilar in appearance. The spires of wheat select and draw up from the soil the matter necessary to produce wheat. The spires of rye draw from the same soil appropriate matter necessary for the production of rye ; and the spires of barley draw from the same soil and select and use what is necessary to produce barley. Each forms and produces its own peculiar berry, and neither can produce what either of the others produces. They are all different kinds of grain.

And the fruit trees close by, each one draws from the same soil the material with which it manufactures its own peculiar fruit with its own peculiar flavor ; and the rosebush draws from the same soil the material with which it forms and paints and perfumes its blossoms ; while the poppy close by, in the same way, from the same soil, produces its narcotic drug. Now all these seemingly little things, considering that they are at the same time being done not only all over this planet, but in millions of other worlds, show as great skill, ingenuity, and wisdom, as that which first created the heavens. These little kernels of grain, these delicious fruits, and these sweet flowers which adorn our hills and plains, are really as wonderful as the stars which adorn the heavens.

Take another example : Here is an egg. Enclosed within the shell is a yellow ball of matter, surrounded by a pellucid, gelatinous substance called albumen. It might help to make a good breakfast, but we will not use it for that purpose now, but put it in an incubator, and in three weeks a living being inside pecks open the shell, and hops out a live, perfectly formed, though scantily fledged chicken. It at once seems as familiar with the world as if it had long lived in it : walks about looking for, selects, picks up and confidently swallows such things and only such things as are good for it to eat. It recognizes water,—knows

at least some of its uses,—puts its little bill into it, and after drawing up a quantity holds its head up high to make it run down its throat. It never saw a hen or had any other earthly teacher. How did it know what was good for it to eat? That it needed water, and that water would run down instead of up? When it has enough it seeks a warm shelter, and there nestles and sleeps until it either wants something more to eat, or to see a little more of the world. Whence all this wisdom and power, but from God, whose creative, life-giving power must be constantly present, and working at every point in his vast universe.

It seems to be the almost universal plan and method of the Supreme Being, that from the most infinitesimal, small beginnings, and by gradual, sometimes very slow, almost imperceptible but sure progress, development and evolution, his great designs are quietly accomplished and brought to perfection. Hence all the great works that are constantly going on within us, and before our eyes and all around us, occasion no surprise, attract but little attention, and, above all, do not awaken within us any realizing sense of the mighty power and wisdom required and being constantly exercised to accomplish such results.

In this connection let us consider the origin of man, and the different species of animate nature. Until quite recently the theory has prevailed that

man and all other animals were created in full form, about as we now find them, at once, by a single fiat of Almighty Power. This theory, however, seems now to be yielding to the far more sensible and probable one elaborated by scientists, that man and all other species of animals have been evolved from infinitesimally small beginnings, described as primordial atoms of protoplasm. Adopting this theory, it must be admitted that all these primordial atoms were created by God, and that if he made one such atom he made many, for he never acts by piecemeal but by multitudes. It must also be conceded that if he made any he probably made many different kinds, and many of each kind, in different parts of his dominions; that each kind was designed and intended to produce a distinct and peculiar genus or species, and that each one has followed the divine creative impulse originally given to it by its creator, and has carried out his original design. Hence it is not necessary to believe that man has evolved through oysters, tadpoles, fishes, reptiles and monkeys; but on the contrary we may assume that he originated from that particular and peculiar atom originally created and specially designed by God for the creation of man. That from this small beginning he has passed through many changes of form and structure adapted to the peculiar design of development; and that all these interme-

diate forms and structures have been left so far behind, and are so totally disintegrated and destroyed, that not a fossil remnant can be found. Hence all search for the fabulous connecting link must fail. The fact that similar organs and structures exist in many animals, frame-works of bones and bodies, composed of flesh containing muscles and nerves, having similar digestive and respiratory apparatus, and that similar appearances develop in the process of formation, is no proof that all proceeded from atoms of protoplasm that were alike and the same in every particular; that all contained the same ultimate design, and received identically the same divine impulse. If we go to a machine shop, we will find many different machines containing parts that are common to all; and in the shop of a carpenter we will find pieces of lumber ready formed, which may be used either in building a steamboat, a cottage, a church or a palace. The only fair conclusion, then, is that the wise creator saw that similar formations and appearances would answer his purpose and design, as well in the formation and development of man as of other animals. There is nothing in all these things that militates against the supposition that man at first proceeded and was developed from a distinct, peculiar and higher grade of atoms than other animals. And it may be a question whether man has yet entirely fulfilled his destiny. It may

be that he is still in only an embryonic or intermediate state, and that in the far distant future a race of beings evolved from man may arise on this planet as far superior to the present race as it now is to the lowest type of monkeys.

This mode of creating animate nature, instead of detracting from greatly enhances and magnifies our wonder and amazement at the God-like cunning, ingenuity, inventive power, and skill, and his wisdom and power to plan and devise ways and means by small beginnings to accomplish such great results.

It cannot be denied that his wisdom is coëx-tensive and commensurate with his power; and it must also be admitted that he is a good Being. Wherever he has created a want or feeling, he has abundantly provided the means for supplying and gratifying them. He has supplied delicious flavors to gratify the taste, pleasant perfumes for the sense of smell, the varied voices of Nature, and the harmonies and melodies of music to charm the ear, and millions of beauties to delight the eye. And he has blessed the mind with the power to think and reason, to explore the fields of science, and revel among the mysteries of his creation.

But this Great Being, great, powerful, wise, and good as he is, must himself be subject to law, —to the laws of his own being, the laws of his

constitution, the laws of his nature. He cannot change his nature, or act beyond or outside, and in violation of, or in opposition to, or inconsistent with, its laws.

It follows then that he must be immutable,—unchangeable. As he cannot change himself, no outside power or influence can change him, or turn or vary him from his purpose and objects, or influence his actions. If it could, it might upset and overturn his government. Such a thing is impossible. Therefore, "he is the same yesterday, today, and forever."

It also follows that God must be constantly and continuously active, always at work. It is the law of his nature, and necessary to keep his creation from falling into chaos. It is impossible that he should ever tire or need rest, or that he ever did rest on any seventh day, or any day, or at any time.

It is also obvious that all created things, animate and inanimate, are subject to laws implanted by God within them, inherent and interwoven with their natures. .

"No man hath seen God at any time," nor has he ever by word, or any human language, revealed or directly made himself, or his will, or wishes and desires, known to man. In all these respects he ever has and still does keep himself most effectually concealed, and therefore it is im-

possible to find him out to perfection. But so far as reason furnishes any light, such a Being as I have attempted partially to describe is the Being that must be recognized as God, the great Creator and Governor of the Universe. In contemplating such a Being, we may appreciate this language: "If thou sinnest, what doest thou against him? Or, if thy transgressions be multiplied, what doest thou unto him? If thou be righteous, what givest thou him, or what receivest he of thy hand?"

"Thy wickedness may hurt a man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the Son of Man." The necessary inference is, that neither the sin or righteousness of man can in the least affect God. He is high above us, and far out of the reach of our influence.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE GOD OF MOSES AND THE CHRISTIANS.

Without pretending to have “found out the Almighty to perfection,” I have thus far attempted to suggest and draw to mind some of the characteristics, which every reasonable being must acknowledge and admit to be true, of the One only living and True God, and cannot possibly be otherwise. Now, I propose to show what kind of a being mankind, more particularly Christians, are and long have been setting up and worshipping as God; contrast him with the true God, and show that their mistaken ideas and notions on the subject, instead of doing any good, have caused more trouble, more crime and suffering in the world, than all other causes combined.

They start with the sound doctrine that there is but One only living and True God, but from that point immediately run off into a wilderness of gross absurdities. For, at the next step, without the slightest ground for it in reason, and with nothing to support it but the declaration of one Moses, they arrogantly assume that man is created in the image and likeness of God; and, as a necessary corollary, adopt the absurdity, which this

Moses taught, that God has and is in the image and likeness of man. That he is of a spiritual substance, has infinite power, and considerable wisdom; but has the same form and all the other general characteristics of man. That he has a private residence, called heaven, up in the sky, where he is attended by hosts of spiritual beings, called angels, who perform such duties and services as he requires of them. That long before the time of Moses, but much oftener in his days, and in the days of Joshua and the so-called prophets, he, at times, has left his celestial mansion, and "come down" to visit the leaders of a "chosen people," and personally consult and advise with them, and assist them to carry on their wars and their government. That the Israelites were his favorite people—his chosen people—his own peculiar people—and he was their own God, "an enemy of their enemies, and an adversary of their adversaries,"—that he was not the God of, and did not care for, any other people, but would gladly assist them to "cut off and destroy all other people" that might come in their way, or that occupied any land they might covet.

That in the process of time he became a father, by the birth of Jesus of Nazareth,—the only child he ever had, and who was very dear to him. But it so happened that many of his "chosen people" had the temerity to doubt the paternity of this

child, and then he indignantly ceased to visit them, and transferred his affections from them to and fixed them upon those only, whether Jew or Gentile, who *would* believe that this Jesus was in fact his true, legitimate, and only begotten Son, the true Christ, and would join heart and hand to help him build up a kingdom on earth.

On searching the writings of Moses and the prophets, the believers claimed to discover that it was *clear as light* that this Jesus was the Son of God and the true Christ; that he was alluded to in those writings; that everything about him was clearly predicted, and that it was all contained in, evolved from, and was the legitimate and necessary outcome and fulfillment of the Mosaic dispensation.

The followers of Jesus, believing that he rose from the dead and ascended bodily into heaven, soon adopted the belief which the Greeks had taught for centuries, that the soul of man is immortal, and that there is a "future estate" of rewards and punishments. This is something, however, that Moses never thought of, and his God did not think to mention it at the interview on Mt. Sinai, or anywhere else. Consequently, there was no provision made for it in the Mosaic dispensation. But this new doctrine made it necessary, in the opinion of the Christians, that there should be a great personal Devil and a fearful

Hell, and they set to work to supply them. It was indeed a great work to be performed, without anything whatever either in reason, or fact, or plausible tradition to found them on or make them out of. But the Christians were quite equal to the task, as will hereafter fully appear.

All the Christians have adopted this same God of Moses, with his dear Son, as their God, and believe that all the stories which Moses, Joshua, and the so-called prophets have told about him, as they are recorded in the Old Testament, are true to the letter, perfectly inerrant and infallible; that it is rank heresy and a damnable sin to doubt it; and their system of religion is founded wholly upon that belief and those assumptions, with such additions of Hell and a Devil as they found it necessary to make.

It is interesting to contemplate some of the characteristics or attributes which are attributed to this man-God of Moses and the Christians, and we cannot fail to notice, in passing, that however noble and praise worthy they may be in a God, they were never considered as essential to the good reputation or character of man.

1st. He is said to be a partial God, and the fact seems to be most clearly proved, if the record is true. For it represents that that God chose and selected, out of all the people in the world, the Israelites to be his chosen, peculiar people;

announced himself as their God, to the exclusion of everybody else ; declared that he would " be an enemy of their enemies and an adversary of their adversaries," and promised to lead them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, and " cut off and destroy " all the people that then lived there, and give the whole country exclusively to them for an everlasting possession. This was partiality with a vengeance. Besides, it showed most monstrous cruelty, and an utter disregard of right and justice, and all sound moral principle. A God that could be guilty of it would deserve execration and hatred, rather than praise and honor. The one only living and True God could not have been guilty of anything of the kind.

2nd. This man-God of Moses and the Christians is represented to be a jealous God, and the fact is proved by what purports to be his own declaration and confession. For in the second commandment he uses these words, " For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." These words are reported to be used in connection with a clause forbidding the making of images, and are now held to denounce idolatry as a most heinous sin. But where is the great harm ? An ignorant people, to whom no spiritual being ever revealed anything about himself, but who have conceived the idea that some unseen power exists outside of the earth, that exerts more or less influence over hu-

man affairs, not understanding the art of writing, and having no other way of recording or conveying thoughts and ideas, resort to the making of images that suggest to their minds some idea they have formed about that unseen being. And this is done with the sincere desire of honoring and pleasing that being.

Now, we have a number of little signs or characters which to us represent sounds. Take three of these, G, O and D, put them together, and they form the word God, which is an image, that, to our minds, represents the idea of a Supreme Being. We have books containing many of those images, and in those books we often see beautiful pictures, not only of angels, but of Jesus with his disciples, or on the cross, or in the act of ascending up to heaven. Then, how can we, how could Moses, or any good, fair and just being, complain or get angry, and threaten to punish such an ignorant people, for making images to represent ideas concerning invisible beings? There is no more moral turpitude in it than in making bibles. The true God could not stoop to any such meanness, nor could he possibly be jealous of anything, animate or inanimate, in whatever shape it might be formed. That commandment was formulated and promulgated by Moses for fear that if his people were allowed to make images, as they undoubtedly had been accustomed to do,

that it might distract their minds from him as the only mediator between them and the God he had set up for them, and thus imperil his control over them. All the jealousy was in the mind of Moses.

3rd. This man-God of Moses and the Christians was cruel. What he is reported to have said and promised in regard to murdering, cutting off, and destroying the inhabitants of Canaan, which has been alluded to, and will hereafter be considered more at large, is sufficient evidence of the fact; but there is much other evidence to the same point. I will mention only one other instance, and that, because it was often used in my early days to scare children, and gave them a horrible idea of God. It is the case where it is said two she-bears were sent out of the woods to tear in pieces forty-two children, for speaking disrespectfully to one of the so-called prophets.

4th. This man-God of Moses and the Christians is represented to be a vain God. It is true, they do not use just that word in connection with his name, but they describe him in a way that leaves no doubt of the fact. He likes to be noticed, is fond of praise, adulation, and worship. Like a "scurvy politician," he delights to have his creatures continually "talking him up," telling him how good and great he is, kneeling and prostrating themselves in abject attitudes, and smearing themselves with dust and ashes. For-

merly he was highly pleased with the killing and roasting of beef and mutton on piles of stones, so that he might "smell the sweet savor"; but in modern times he is appeased and satisfied with humble prayers, singing of doleful psalms, wearing long faces, maintaining an austere demeanor, confessing sins, pleading for pardon, building churches, helping him to extend his kingdom and to increase his glory.

It is not possible that the true God can be any such kind of a being as this. He cannot be doubtful of his own position. He is perfectly conscious of his own greatness, power, wisdom and goodness, and does not need to be told and reminded of them; and it is beyond the power of man to add to his glory or increase or diminish, or at all affect, his happiness. His happiness is an ever onward flowing, even current of perfect bliss, broad and deep as eternity, and unaffected by any outside influence. He has no transitory ebullitions of delight at one time, and pain and sorrow at another, but is always the "same, yesterday, today and forever." It follows that it is not possible that he can be influenced by prayer or worship, or anything man can do, to change or vary any purpose or plan of action; otherwise, everything would be thrown into doubt and confusion. Therefore, he neither requires or desires anything of the kind.

And it is a great mistake to suppose that he is more pleased with psalm singing than with the opera, or other good and lively music ; or with a prayer-meeting, than with a jolly dance ; or with a long face and austere demeanor, than he is with a cheerful countenance, a merry laugh or a lively frolic. For diversion and amusement are necessary for a healthy development of both body and mind, and are all included in the grand design of the True God to promote the happiness of man. Happiness ! happiness ! That is the great end and object of life, and of all God's designs. " What he delights in must be happy."

5th. This man-God of Moses and the Christians was a double-dealing and deceitful personage. On the one hand, he urged Moses to petition Pharoah to let his people go; and on the other hand, as soon as Pharoah consented, this God would interfere, and secretly influence Pharoah to change his mind and refuse to let them go. And it is represented he then made this refusal a pretext for inflicting upon all the Egyptians cruel plagues, such as frogs, lice, flies, murrain, boils, locusts, and ending with killing the first-born in all their families. This farce was repeated ten or eleven times. After this God had thus glutted his evil and wicked disposition, the Israelites obtained permission to depart.

6th. But, before leaving, this God of Moses

and the Christians had one more mean trick to play upon the Egyptians, which was "to give the Israelites favor in the eyes of the Egyptians," to enable them "to borrow jewels of silver and gold, and wearing apparel of the Egyptians," with intent to steal and run away with them, and thus "spoil the Egyptians," and thus start his chosen people in the jewelry and "old clo" business. That made this God of Moses and the Christians guilty of all those petty larcenies.

I present these six several indictments against this God of Moses, that has been adopted by the Christians, all of which are clearly proved by the record, and either of which is sufficient to prove that he is not the True God, and that Moses was an impostor. I have not gone one step outside of the record, but have taken it just as it stands. It shows that this pretended God of Moses was, either directly or indirectly, guilty of all the principal crimes known to law, including robbery and murder; and that he even stooped to deceit, and double dealing, and petty larceny. That he had no regard for right and justice, and was destitute of all moral principle. It is impossible that any of these characteristics or attributes can belong to the True God, and it is obvious that an imaginary God can have only such attributes as its creator chooses to affix to it. The only solution is that Moses, who, with his ancestors, created this

God, ascribed to him his own characteristics and attributes. They are all the characteristics and attributes, not of any God, but only of Moses himself. And they clearly show what kind of a man Moses was.

It is a great marvel how such a God as this pretended God of Moses evidently was could have got such a start in the world, and maintained such a sway and dominion as he has for over three thousand years, over so many of the most intelligent portion of mankind. Reason teaches the existence of a great Creator, and knowledge of his works has revealed to us what must be some of his attributes. All beyond this is only vain conjecture. Here knowledge and reason meet an impassable barrier. All beyond is the boundless field of fancy, in which superstition has plowed and harrowed and toiled and revelled from remotest time, but to no purpose. For everything it has produced is but the offspring and flummery of delusive imagination. As it is entirely out of the dominion of knowledge and reason, they are powerless either to affirm or refute any of its theories. Mysterious infatuations, engendered by childish ignorance, became impressed upon the minds of our very remote ancestors, and, with certain modifications made from time to time, they have been handed down from generation to generation, and prevail at the present day.

Reason seems to have no more control over them now than it had thousands of years ago, or much to do with them. A mysterious story gets started by some perhaps unknown, but certainly irresponsible, person ; superstition catches it up, enlarges and shapes it, and evolves it into a religious dogma. This is the grand source of all religious doctrines, and no real authentic account can be given of their origin.

Therefore, the world progresses, becomes more and more enlightened in regard to all matters that are within the scope and domain of reason and knowledge. They work and develop the rich surface soil ; while the antique delusions which are out of the reach, and are not subject to the control of reason and knowledge, and which are the barren subsoil, still remain undisturbed in superstitious minds. For this reason, superstition of all things is the most difficult to overcome, and the last to disappear.

Some people may be surprised to be told that Christians now believe in this God of Moses, but such is the fact. All denominations of Christians still hold to and worship the same God, in connection with his reputed Son. The Jews also stick to him, but do not believe that he was the father of Jesus. The Mohammedans also hold to the same God, believe that Jesus was a respectable prophet, but that Mahomet was far his

superior. All believe in the same God, and all the so-called orthodox Christians believe that all that is said about him in the Old Testament is literally true, inerrant, infallible, and that it is a damnable sin to doubt it. To prove this, I need only to refer to the case of Dr. Briggs, of Brooklyn, N. Y. He is a very learned man, and had charge of a theological institution. He dared to doubt the accuracy of some parts of the Old Testament, and for this he was accused of heresy. He was tried before the ecclesiastical tribunals, and convicted, and is now denounced as a heretic. Those learned prosecutors may think they have done a great thing for their faith, and they have. They have established a most decided and emphatic contempt for it, wherever known. About three hundred years ago the sentence of Dr. Briggs would have been death by fire at the stake, and it would have been so now if the prosecution had the power. It shows that the same old leaven is still there, and that the safety of society depends upon never allowing religion to get control.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE SCHEME OF MOSES.

MOSES was undoubtedly a great man in his time, an able leader and a shrewd politician. He enjoyed the advantage of being educated in the royal family of Egypt, and therefore, necessarily, as a priest, he was well versed in all the mysteries of the Egyptian religion, which was paganism. Hence, he must have been simply a pagan. He found his race in bondage, and he formed the great design of liberating them, leading them to Canaan, conquering that country, and there building up an independent nation. Their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, lived there, and he considered it the most desirable country he knew of for the experiment. At the time they lived there they were but few in number. When Jacob, on the invitation of Joseph, migrated to Egypt, he, with his family, servants and all that accompanied him, numbered only seventy souls. He left a sacred burial place in Canaan, which was bought and paid for by Abraham ; but aside from this it is not likely that he had title to much land. While he lived there, being a just man, he was on terms of friendship with his neighbors, as Abraham and Isaac also were.

The record says the Israelites had been in Egypt four hundred and thirty years, and during that time they had increased from seventy to about two millions, and the land that Jacob left in Canaan would hardly accommodate that number. In those days, the moral right of people to the country they lived in was very little regarded. The doctrine that might makes right generally prevailed, and in this respect, or on any other moral question, Moses was not at all in advance of the age. And, therefore, he conceived the idea of conquering and taking possession of that whole country, and giving his people most exclusive possession of it.

His plans were deeply laid and most thoroughly matured. Difficulties were foreseen, and the means to obviate or overcome them had been well considered. He had studied it during the forty years he lived in the wilderness with Jethro, his father-in law. It was no hastily devised scheme. He had been over the ground, and understood the topography of all important localities. He also understood the people he had to deal with. They had been oppressed and degraded as bondsmen for ages. They were ignorant and very superstitious. He clearly understood that religious superstition was the strongest cord that could be used to bind such a people to a purpose, and he determined to use it to the full extent of his power, and he also

determined upon the kind of God he would use for that purpose. He knew just when, where and how to begin.

He was eighty years old at the time of the exodus, and his high intellectual powers, coupled with his gray hairs and venerable appearance, commanded attention and respect. And the dignity and earnestness with which he unfolded the design to take that down-trodden race from under their cruel task-masters, and settle them in a land of their own, "a land flowing with milk and honey," aroused their unbounded enthusiasm. This was the great scheme of Moses which he studied out and planned while tending the flocks of Jethro, and it was the motive power and mainspring of all his subsequent actions.

Before unfolding this scheme, Moses undoubtedly taught the people the ideas he had formed in regard to the God that he would represent as their God, and as the greatest of all Gods. They must have a God of their own as other people had, and a little different from other Gods. He referred to some old traditions, (probably manufactured or remodeled them himself to suit his purpose, as we have no knowledge of them except through him,) about how God made the world. All pagans had about the same idea about their gods. How he made Adam and Eve, how he "came down," and visited and talked with them;

how he “came down” and talked with Noah, and employed him to build the ark, and afterwards “came down” to Shinar to see about the tower they were building. Then he represented him to be the special and particular God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, their forefathers,—that he frequently “came down” and visited them, and covenanted to give to their seed all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession. How this God told Abraham that his posterity would be strangers and serve in a strange land for four hundred years, (which described what had happened to them,) but that they would eventually come out “with great substance.” As they had been in Egypt a little longer than that, this pretence tallied with their condition, and the inference was that the time had now come to be delivered.

After thus instilling into their minds the belief that this God was in the habit, at times, of “coming down” and visiting and talking with man, he was ready to advance his great and leading pretence, which governed and colored all others, and guided and controlled all his subsequent actions. It was the first and leading pretence; and this, with the pretended orders, directions and promises of this God, made in furtherance of the scheme it unfolds, is the touchstone by which the truth or falsity of all his pretences must be tried,

judged of and determined. The pretence was, that while tending the flocks of his father-in-law in the wilderness, this God called to him from a bush that appeared to be flaming with fire, intimated that the Israelites were his own peculiar people, and said to him, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." "I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and *I am come down to deliver* them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good and a large; unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites"; and ordered him, Moses, to attend to the business; that he, Moses, pretended much diffidence and doubt as to his ability for such an undertaking but that God urged it upon him, and to strengthen and encourage him, said, "*Certainly, I will be with thee.*" So it seems, according to Moses, God was the first to suggest and direct this scheme; and that afterwards, and in furtherance of the same, Moses told them that God said to him, "I will send my angel before thee to keep thee in the way." "I will be an enemy of thy enemies, and an adversary of thy adversaries, and bring thee unto the land of the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and

the Jebusites, *and I will cut them off.*" "And I will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come." This is the first, the great and all-absorbing pretense of Moses, and the most important of all things in the Pentatuch. It was the first pretended interview between God and Moses, and the beginning of his career; the first dominant and the most important of all pretences as relates to God, and upon which hangs the whole question whether Moses is to be believed or not. If this story is true, and truthfully represents the True God, then we may believe anything else that Moses says. That was the starting point, and if true we may as well lay down our arms and surrender, for we are at the mercy of a most fearful God.

To judge of the truth or falsity of such a pretence involves an inquiry into the motives which Moses had, to pretend that God ordered and directed and promised to assist in carrying out that scheme; and also the right, justice and morality of the scheme itself; and whether it is possible that the True God could have had anything to do with it, as represented by Moses. These questions will be fully considered after we have shown how the scheme was carried out. For a solution of just these questions must determine whether or not the Hebraic religion or the Christian religion, which grew out of and is founded upon it, had any Divine origin.

Moses, of course, claimed that he was on the most intimate terms of friendship with God, had constant personal interviews and consultations with him, and was acting in all things under his advice and personal directions.

By such pretences he won the hearts and secured the reverence of the people. They were ready to accept his God, and devote themselves to his service. He further made them believe that they must accept and rely upon himself as the only mediator between them and God, and that all communications must pass through him. They must not have any idols, as idols might distract their minds from him, and weaken his control. This gave him power to say just what he pleased about God, and represent him as saying just what it would please him to have God say. And Moses undoubtedly used this power in a way that he thought would best answer his purpose, and help him to achieve the great conquest he had in view. It is evident that the Israelites had no knowledge of his God, except what they received from him, and that they believed all that he said.

After contending a while with the sorcerers and magicians of Pharoah, and beating them at their own game, and claiming to inflict cruel plagues upon the people of the land, and after being favored by his God to steal jewels of sil-

ver and gold, and wearing apparel, from and thus “spoil the Egyptians,” they were ready to desert their old task-masters, and direct their steps toward the happy land of Canaan. They had implicit faith in their great leader and his God, and they started off with high hopes and brilliant expectations. The caravan numbered “six hundred thousand *men* on foot, besides *children*”—probably many on animals and in carriages. There is no mention of women, but it afterwards appears there were many. “And a mixed multitude went up, also, with them; and flocks and herds—even very much cattle.” In all, they must have numbered about two millions of people. They were elated with the idea that in a *few* days they would be in “the land flowing with milk and honey.”

Moses knew better, and he foresaw that that disappointment would be one of the troubles he would have to meet. They were an unorganized rabble, and, even with all the promised help of God, they were in no condition to meet and overcome such opposition as they would have to face in Canaan. It would be necessary to keep them some time in the wilderness, to organize and train them for the contest. And it would also be necessary for Moses to furnish some satisfactory excuses. He anticipated all this, and he was prepared to show that his God would either help him out, or convince them that he was doing right,

and acting for their best interest. He had got them to the plains of Sinai, and that was the place above all others that would answer his purpose.

It took a few days to reach Sinai, and that was enough to show them that a march through the wilderness was not a mere holiday excursion, and the buoyancy of their feelings began to abate. There was a scarcity of food, and they suffered with hunger, and they missed many other comforts they had been accustomed to enjoy. Their views changed. They began to doubt the divine authority of Moses, and whether he was quite as intimate with God and as sure of his support and assistance as he pretended. They had never seen any meetings or heard any conversations between them. They were not being led the shortest way to Canaan, and would not reach there as soon as they expected. Their ardor was cooled. They were disappointed. They longed for the flesh-pots of Egypt, and wanted to return there. Their faith in Moses was shaken. They began to murmur, and accuse Moses and Aaron with the design of leading "them out into the wilderness to kill them with hunger."

Moses was prepared for the emergency. He foresaw it, and Sinai was just the place he had fixed upon for making a most convincing demonstration. And to this end he cunningly arranged

to have a pretended meeting with God, in such a way that it would seem to be in their presence, and yet so that in fact they could not tell whether there was any actual meeting or not. He appointed the meeting to be held upon the mountain. He had plenty of confederates interested in his scheme, and he and they had been up in the mountain beforehand, and had prepared a place where he might spend a few days comfortably ; and they had undoubtedly gathered near the top a large pile of brush and combustibles ready for the occasion. To prevent eaves-droppers and curiosity seekers from skulking around to see or hear and exposing the deception, Moses set a strong guard of his confederates around the foot of the mountain, and proclaimed the solemn commandment as coming from God : “Take heed that you go not up into the mountain, or touch the border of it : whosoever touches the Mount shall be surely put to death.” This prevented any one from hearing or seeing what took place up there, and left Moses to tell just such a story as he pleased, without fear of contradiction.

There is a fact which should have its proper weight and bearing in considering the account of this pretended meeting, and that is, that the Israelites had never heard or seen any such things as thunder and lightning, as such things were

never known in Egypt. About Mt. Sinai they were common, and Moses designed to make use of them to play an important part in his farce, to terrify his ignorant and superstitious people, and make them believe all his pretensions. It was what he calculated upon long beforehand.

When the appointed time came, Moses started up into the mountain in sight of all the people. They could see the venerable old man, slowly and solemnly climbing up the steep grades. His form gradually diminishes in appearance, till at length a natural turn in his path takes him out of sight, and he arrives at his ready-prepared retreat. He stays there until a thunder storm occurs. The black cloud moves over, and seems to rest upon the mountain. He sets the brush heap on fire, the flame and smoke ascend, and the whole mountain top seems to be in a blaze. The lightnings flash, and the more terrible thunders roar and shake the ground. The people are amazed, confounded, awe-struck. They could have no doubt that Moses was having a meeting with God; that they were on the most intimate terms of friendship with each other, and that whatever Moses might say would surely represent Divine Will. When he came down, he brought two hewn tables of stone, which he said God had made for him, and had written upon both sides of them with his own finger, what afterwards ap-

peared to be the Ten Commandments. On another occasion, when he went up into the mountain, Moses reported that God arranged it so that he, in fact, saw the "back parts" of the very person of God. That God would not allow his face to be seen by man, as man could not possibly endure the glory of it. So God put him into the cleft of a rock, and covered him with his hand, while the glory of his *front parts* passed over, and then took away his hand, so that he saw his "back parts." The lightning and thunder, fire and smoke, to the ignorant minds of his people, confirmed as truth all his statements and pretensions.

But when Moses came down from the mountain, he discovered that some of the people had become discontented, and clamored for a God, and that to pacify them Aaron had made for them a golden calf, in imitation, probably, of Apis, an Egyptian god. Moses pretended to be very angry. It seemed to threaten his supreme power and control over the people. Such things would have a tendency to distract their minds from him, and so weaken his authority. It was necessary that such things should be nipped in the bud. So like a child with his playthings, he dashed the two tables down to the ground, and broke them to pieces. It is hardly likely, if his pretensions were true, that they were actually hewed out by God

and contained his personal autograph, that he would have treated them with so much irreverence and disrespect. This act can be accounted for only on the ground that Moses knew that there were enough more where they came from, and he used the incident to impress the people that if they persisted in clamoring for idols, and did not obey, and do just as he (Moses) commanded, God would abandon them to utter destruction. It had the desired effect, and Moses easily obtained more tables.

The question now arises, Is this story of Moses about meeting God on Mt. Sinai, true? Did any such meeting in fact occur, or was it only a farce and false pretence?

The story is the only foundation of the Jewish and Christian belief in *divine revelation*, and of their systems of religion; and, if true, it would prove that this partial, jealous, vain, and cruel God is after all the real True God. But is it true? Can it possibly be true?

## CHAPTER IV.

## MOSES AT SINAI.

IN criticising the story of the pretended meeting on Mount Sinai, it must be remarked:

1st. That such a meeting would be miraculous, something contrary to human experience ; and, to entitle it to belief, it requires strong proof—proof commensurate with its improbability. We have nothing but the word of Moses for it, if indeed we have as much as that, for it is by no means certain who wrote the account of it. To believe it requires not faith in God, as Christian teachings would seem to imply, *but faith in Moses*. Here is the great point. Faith, not in God, but in Moses, is required as the groundwork and foundation of both the Jewish and Christian religions.

2nd. Moses was an interested witness. He had a strong motive to pretend that he was on intimate terms of friendship with God, in order to secure the confidence and control of the people, and to represent God as saying to him privately such things as would inspire them with courage and resolution to persevere to accomplish his design of settling them in Canaan. And it was all in his power to represent God as saying and prom-

ising just such things as he knew would please the people.

3rd. The pretences were not designed or calculated to injure his people, but, on the contrary, only to inspire them with confidence in him as their leader, and courage to prosecute the work. Hence they were quite innocent so far as his people were concerned, and Moses cared for nothing else.

4th. The scene is laid in an early, ignorant age, when Moses, (as appears from Genesis, the authorship of which is ascribed to him,) as well as everybody else, believed that this world was all there was of creation—that God was limited to it—that he existed in a human form—and traveled about from place to place. All such ideas were simply heathenish ; and with such ideas Moses, undoubtedly, thought it would be safe to make such representations as would help him to accomplish his designs. But they are all inconsistent with reason, and cannot be true.

5th. In such an ignorant and superstitious age, and with such beliefs prevailing, a belief in such marvelous pretences was easily induced, and the strong motive Moses had for making them is sufficient to destroy their credibility.

6th. The great care and pains that were taken to secure secrecy,—exclude all eyes and ears from the identical spot of the pretended meeting,—the

guard around the mountain, and the penalty of death to anyone that touched it, proved that it was a deception and a farce.

7th. The manner in which Moses treated the two tables of stone which he pretended were hewn out by God, and contained the very autograph of God himself, shows that he had no such reverence and respect for them as he certainly would have had if his pretences had been true.

8th. There were many people on the earth for at least two or three thousand years, and probably a great deal more, before the time of this pretended meeting, far advanced in civilization,—the Egyptians, Syrians, Assyrians, Persians, etc., all inquiring and anxious to get some reasonable and true idea and conception of God ; and if God ever intended to make a particular revelation of himself in person to man, it is unreasonable and absurd to suppose that he would have perfectly ignored, overlooked, and passed by all those other peoples, and waited to the time of Moses, and revealed himself for the first time in that wilderness, and to such a rabble of Egyptian slaves. I say the first time, for all the stories about his visits to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were fabrications of Moses. There is no other proof of any visits to them but his word. Beside, his visits to them as described were for frivolous purposes ; there was no revelation made to them of interest

to mankind,—nothing but that their seed was to have the land of Canaan. As we can easily see his motive and design, we must discredit the representations.

9th. If God ever intended to make a personal revelation of himself to man, and it was important, and he required and intended to have it believed, he would not have made it so secretly to one man, and made the belief of it to depend wholly upon the credibility of that one man: all to depend as it does exclusively upon *faith in Moses*, who had a strong personal motive and interest to deceive and make false pretences. It was just as easy for God to proclaim himself publicly and directly to the whole assembly on the plain, or to every inhabitant on earth at once, to the Egyptians, Assyrians, etc., who were anxious to learn, and then there could have been no doubt. Then we could have faith in God. As it now stands, all there is to depend upon is faith in Moses. All depends upon faith in Moses.

10th. The pretence of Moses, that he actually saw the “back parts” of the person of God, as related in the thirty-third chapter of Exodus, and representing him to have a human form, with face, feet, hands and back parts, is an obvious falsehood, and characterizes all his other pretences. This alone proves that he was an imposter, and unworthy of belief.

11th. But there is another and very important test, which shows that the pretence of Moses in regard to having a personal interview with God on Mount Sinai, and there receiving revelations from him, was false ; and that is the fact that the revelation he pretended to receive contained nothing of *importance to mankind* that was then new to the world. All the sound moral precepts contained in the decalogue had been established law, wherever mankind was formed into society, for thousands of years before Moses ever saw Mount Sinai. These things required no special revelation, for they were originally implanted or incorporated in the nature of man, and had long been developed by the reason with which God also originally endowed man. Moses put them into a concise, tangible and useful shape, as he was fully competent to do ; for they were a necessary part of his education as an Egyptian priest, and he perfectly understood them. When he murdered the Egyptian, he knew what the penalty would be, if discovered. Hence, he fled to the wilderness, where he lived with Jethro forty years before he pretended that God noticed him. There was nothing in this decalogue, or any revelation Moses pretended to receive, which was important for man to know, that had not been well known for ages. There was no revelation in regard to any future state, what would become of man after this life.

All rewards and punishments spoken of in the decalogue are confined to this life. There is not the slightest intimation about any future existence, or about a hell, or a devil, or any scheme of salvation which Christians now claim to believe—nothing at all, except what was then within the knowledge of man and well understood. Moses was cunning enough to confine the revelations to what was within his own knowledge, which in effect makes it no revelation at all. And in the interviews which Moses fabricated, and pretended that God had with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, there is no allusion to any of these things. The only revelation made to them was that their seed should have the land of Canaan. And this was taught by Moses to make his people believe that they had a divine right to it, and to induce them to fight for it.

I said there was nothing of *importance* in the decalogue that was new to the world. However, there were two or three *new things* in it. The first commandment explained by its context was decidedly new. It reads as follows: "And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought *thee* out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." This purports to be a solemn declaration of God himself, that he was their God—the God of the Israelites.

He is represented as addressing the people he had brought out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. He had brought no other people out of Egypt and the house of bondage ; hence, it is evident that this declaration was intended for the Israelites exclusively. And, as it is represented that he afterwards told them that he would be an “enemy of their enemies, and an adversary of their adversaries,” and would lead them to the land of Canaan, and “cut off and destroy” all other people for their benefit, we must conclude that it was intended to be understood that he was most particularly, emphatically, and exclusively their own God, and that he did not care for,—was not the God of any other people. This was, indeed, a new revelation. But it is manifestly false and absurd as to the True God, and proves that Moses was imposing a falsehood upon his people. For the True God is the God of all mankind, without distinction or partiality.

The second commandment, in spirit and real meaning, is unworthy of God or man, as I have previously attempted to show. It was instigated by the jealousy of Moses, to remove everything that might have a tendency to distract and divert the minds of the people from him, and thus endanger his entire control over them.

As to the fourth commandment, the Assyrians and other Eastern people kept the seventh day

from time immemorial. The reason they assigned was, that it was supposed to be presided over by Saturn, whom they considered to be a gloomy god, and therefore they regarded it as an unlucky day. For that reason they would not perform any labor on that day, or engage in any enterprise. The kings would not ride out on that day, for fear something might happen to them. So all staid at home, and kept it as a feast day. But a day of rest from labor, as often as one in seven, and strictly guarded by law, to be kept as a day "made for man," and not as a day for which man was made, would be a wise provision. To be of any use to man, however, it should be devoted to whatever may best tend to rest and relax the mind, as well as the body, from the drudgery of labor. And this would include intellectual entertainments mingled with healthy diversions, amusements, social gatherings, and whatever may tend to promote happiness—the great end and object of life. So far as the Sabbath mentioned in the fourth commandment would deviate from this, it could never be approved by the True God.

12th. The fact that Moses pretended that God on Mt. Sinai gave him the plan and all the minute specifications for making the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant, is further evidence of the falsity of his pretences about meeting and talking

with God on Mt. Sinai. For it is proved that the Tabernacle was patterned exactly after the plan of the Egyptian temples, and the Ark also was patterned after certain chests or boxes that were used in the temples for keeping their sacred archives,—with all which Moses, as an Egyptian priest, was perfectly familiar.

Considering, then, the age in which this pretended meeting on Mt. Sinai is said to have occurred ; the miraculousness and improbability of it ; that there is no evidence of it but the word of Moses ; the belief Moses then had in regard to creation and of God,—which will be enlarged upon hereafter,—that God existed in a human form ; his declaration about seeing the person of God ; the general nature of the pretences ; the strong motive he had for making them ; the power he had to make them falsely, without the fear of detection ; that they were calculated to please his people ; the readiness with which such an ignorant people would believe marvelous and supernatural stories ; the parade and ostentation with which he went up into the carefully and securely guarded mountain, quite out of sight, and using the natural action of the elements to contribute wonder and to support the deception ; the fact that the pretended revelation contained nothing but gross absurdities, that were then new to the world ; the irreverent manner with

which he treated what he claimed to be the very autograph of God himself, and his pretence of having received the plans and specifications for making the Tabernacle and the Ark directly from God ;—taking all these things together, we must conclude that the pretences about meeting God in person on Mt. Sinai are false ; that it was all deception,—a stupendous farce.

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## CHAPTER V.

### HOW THE SCHEME RESULTED.

AFTER Moses, by his farcical demonstrations, had convinced his people, to their satisfaction, that he was on terms of intimate personal friendship and daily companionship with God, and all doubts as to the truth of what he told them about God were silenced, he turned his attention to the two great and principal pieces of work that were necessary to carry out his design. One was to establish a system of religious worship, which would solidify his power and secure his control, and at the same time furnish a National religion,

and have them well drilled in it before they were scattered over Canaan ; and the other was to organize an army capable of performing the bloody work he had marked out for them. And both were carried on simultaneously.

His system of worship was organized upon the plan of having a large and influential body of people, each and all personally interested, to advocate, promote, and build up the system. To this end he established a priesthood, to attend to the strictly devotional part of the business, and appointed his brother Aaron and all his male descendants a permanent priesthood ; and as polygamy was not forbidden, that class after a while became quite numerous. Next, he detailed all the descendants of Levi as a permanent order of levites, to assist the priests in various more or less menial devotional labors, and this class alone, when the census was taken about a year after they left Egypt, numbered over twenty-two thousand.

To provide for the support of this large body of priests and levites, Moses devised a system of sacrifices, as heathen nations had done before him ; and the people, partly by legal requirements, and partly by superstitious devotion, were induced to contribute beef, mutton, corn, oil, and wine (all must be of the very best quality,) and those that had none of these things could com-

pound with money. All were theoretically free offerings, to be destroyed to please and appease God, but practically to feed and support the priests and levites. While the beef and mutton were being cooked, the "Lord might smell the sweet savor," but the priests and levites ate the meat. So that large body were employed to support themselves by supporting the system. Of course, it at once became their pleasing duty, as it so exactly coincided with their personal interest to advocate all the pretences of Moses, and guard the system against innovation,— see that the superstitions of the people were kept up to fever heat, so that they would not flag in their offerings; and pay particular attention to seeing that all the children were fully educated in the same faith. It was all a cunningly devised scheme to support the supporters of the system.

But what are we to think of the main feature of that system of worship—*the sacrifices*? What are we to think of that mode and manner of worshipping an intelligent God? How can any rational beings, unless steeped in ignorance and superstition, and destitute of any reasonable idea of God, suppose or believe that he could be honored or pleased by having dumb brutes butchered and burned or roasted on piles of stones? As an act of worship of God, it is supremely ridiculous. Does it not show at once that the worship of God

had nothing to do with it, but that it was only a cunning scheme to support the *priests* and *levites*,—that *that* was the true and only reason for it,—and that they were thus supported to secure and bind them to advocate and support the system and pretences of Moses? Is it not clear that it was all a deception, and a fraud upon the people?

The other business that Moses had on hand at Sinai was to organize an army. And this was the most important and necessary of all things that he had to do. For notwithstanding all the promises of assistance from God, which he pretended to have, and which would have been amply sufficient if true, he was too cunning to attempt to rely upon them, and so he set about organizing an effective force. In number he had a plenty of men, but they were fresh from the fields of bondage,—quite raw. They were not soldiers. The work he had laid out to be done required soldiers. Therefore all able-bodied men were enrolled, and captains appointed over thousands and hundreds and fifties and tens; and, of course, they were all carefully drilled, trained and exercised for a long time with that terrible object in view. They stayed in the wilderness many years roving about, an immense horde of marauders, and until all but a very few that left Egypt died off, and a new generation that had not been subjected to the

enervating influence of slavery had taken their place. By this time a strong and powerful army was formed, that was fully capable and able to carry out the designs of Moses without any special help from God. Moses, by this time, was nearly a hundred and twenty years old, and of course was unable to lead the army in person into the field. He appointed Joshua as the general for that purpose, and also at his death to be his successor to the government and to finish the work. Joshua had been the chief man under Moses and next to him from the start. He was a man of ability, and richly endowed with all the cruel and bloodthirsty qualities requisite for the terrible business that was before him. The army was a desperate and powerful band of robbers and murderers. Neither Moses, Joshua, or their army had any regard for justice or human rights. They were all alike,—destitute of human feelings and all moral principles. When ready to move, they came down upon the innocent and unoffending people that were in their way like an army of hungry, ravenous wolves upon defenseless sheep, and moved on a remorseless, heartless, overwhelming flood of destruction, sweeping away, cutting off, butchering and destroying every human being,—man, woman and child,—that came in their way. There was, however, one remarkable exception to this, which deserves to be mentioned.

After the army had cut off and slain all the men of Midian, and was exhausted by its work of slaughter, it appeared that there was a large number of women and children that had been overlooked and were left still alive, and the tired soldiers took them prisoners and brought them, with the prey and spoils, to Moses. "And Moses was wroth." He was angry because they had not been slain, and said: "Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him." But all the women,—"children—that hath not known a man by lying with him, keep alive *for yourselves*." What a man to claim companionship and direct intercourse with God!

This army utterly depopulated all the land through which they passed, took all property that could be moved, and left nothing behind them but ruin and desolation. Having murdered, cut off, and destroyed the inhabitants of Bashan and Moab, they seized all those rich lands, together with their flocks and herds and other property, and there they rested a while from their infamous labors. There Moses died, and the government passed into the hands of Joshua.

In a few days, Joshua, with his army, passed over Jordan, and began the work of devastation in Canaan itself. He murdered thirty-one kings, destroyed their kingdoms, cut off and destroyed

the people with an indiscriminate slaughter, seized all their lands and property, and thus completed the bloody work marked out by Moses. There never was a more unjust, cruel, inhuman and infamous act of savage barbarity perpetrated by any people on the face of the globe. The whole scheme was projected by Moses, with utter disregard of justice and of all human rights; and was prosecuted, carried on, and accomplished by crime and bloodshed, and with a refinement of cruelty that shocks the moral sense. Joshua was the general and direct leader through it all, and the pages of history are not stained with the name of a more atrocious robber and murderer. And yet people are deluded by nothing but rank superstition into the belief that all this horrible work was instigated, ordered and directed by God at the burning bush, for the sole benefit of that depraved horde of cut-throats. It is interesting to skim over the pages of the history of a few succeeding years, and see how this all turned out.

The hopes of the children of Israel were at length realized. They were in possession of the land of Canaan, which Moses taught them to believe that "God sware" unto them for "an everlasting possession." Many of them soon found the service of Baal and Ashteroth more agreeable than that of the God of Moses, and they probably were quite as real and quite as good gods as the

one represented or created by Moses. The Israelites lived there for many years ; fought a good deal among themselves, and with neighboring peoples ; but they came to be pretty well united many years after under David, who made himself popular among them. David reigned over them forty years, when he died and left the kingdom to his son, Solomon, who, at the time was but a young boy. However, he was a very clever youth ; he made friends with all the heathen and idolatrous nations, far and near, by marrying the daughters of all their kings, and building temples to their gods, as well as to Jehovah. He engaged in foreign commerce, was very successful, and brought precious metals to Jerusalem in great abundance. His tables were loaded with vessels of gold, and he made silver "plenty as stones in the street"; but his fast life brought him to an early grave. He died at the age of about fifty-five, leaving seven hundred widows to mourn his loss, and three hundred other women to look for other lovers. It is easy to understand how such a man, as he saw his end approaching, might cry out, with full appreciation of the fact, "Vanity of vanities,—all is vanity."

Then the kingdom was rent asunder. Reobohem, the son of Solomon, retained Jerusalem with the tribe of Judah, and perhaps a remnant of Benjamin, afterwards known as "the Jews";

and the other ten tribes (afterwards known as Israel) chose Jerobohan for their king, and made Schechem their capital. Then followed war and fighting among this chosen seed of Abraham and between themselves,—Israel against Judah and Judah against Israel,—almost continually for centuries. The Israelites became quite idolatrous. Then probably many that were opposed to idolatry migrated into Asia Minor, Greece, Rome and Egypt, and there built synagogues. Those that remained were finally conquered, taken into captivity, and their lands confiscated by the conquerors. Judah held out a little longer, but soon after the death of the good Josiah, who was a good man, Jerusalem was also taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and many of the people carried away into captivity; and then all the land of Canaan, which Moses said that God sware unto the seed of Abraham for “an everlasting possession,” was wholly taken away from them, became absorbed in the great Persian Empire, and the seed of Abraham has never since had a country they could call their own. The avenging hand of Justice was plainly visible. The land that was so unjustly acquired by them by crime and blood-shed was all taken away, and the great dynasty that was founded upon the false and blasphemous pretences of Moses was shattered, disintegrated, ground to powder, and the people scattered to the

four winds of heaven. This most just doom was a long time in coming ; but it was sure to come, and it did come. Thus (to paraphrase an old sentiment) :

“ The true God’s mills grind slow,  
    But grind exceeding small ;  
With patience long he waits,  
    But *surely* grind they *all.*”

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## CHAPTER VI.

### JESUS OF NAZARETH.

ABOUT 1450 years after the death of Moses another great and better man appeared in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, who, after his death, became the innocent cause of great changes, much controversy, violent conflicts of opinion, and considerable trouble. But the legitimate force and power of his teachings and example have hitherto been greatly hampered and restrained by superstition, but have by no means been exhausted or diminished. The great object of his life was not to save souls from a terrible hell, which had no existence, but to purify the morals of society,

elucidate and inculcate sound principles, and induce and promote the cultivation of true charity among men; and to the end of time, and long after all false notions shall have been entirely dissipated and passed away, he will be admired and venerated as the guiding star to all workers in that field.

As when a meteor flashes across the sky, we involuntarily turn to look at it, let us now pause a while to contemplate the life and character of this great and good man. Jesus was a Jew of humble parentage, but possessed of a high order of intellect, and a clear and exalted conception of moral principles and duties. He was brought up and educated in the Jewish faith, and, like other children, naturally adopted the faith of his parents. He sincerely believed in Moses and the prophets,—never thought of doubting what was claimed for them by his ancestors, or that their writings contained the true revealed will and commandments of the one only living and True God. He supposed that, rightly understood and practiced, they contained everything that was essential and necessary to promote the well being and happiness of man. As he grew to manhood he discovered great errors. He did not mistrust that the system was false, and that that was what occasioned the wrong; but thought they were errors of practice that had crept into the system,

and that they had a bad effect and a demoralizing tendency. He saw that the leaders were paying far more attention to outside show—to forms and ceremonies and the letter of the law—than to the true spirit and meaning of sound moral precepts, and he conceived it to be his duty to try to correct them. He began modestly to impart his views to his companions in the humbler walks of life, but his teachings were so pointed and forcible that they attracted great attention. He spake as they had never before heard man speak. The people became deeply interested, and multitudes followed to listen to his discourses. His severe censures and reproofs reached the ears of the leaders of society, and they felt the sting. The proud Pharisees were indignant that a Nazarene—a person of such low origin—should presume to criticise and reprove them; and they were so wrought up by the fact that the people were following, listening, believing and adopting his views that they determined, if possible, to put him out of the way. They accused him of heresy, and an attempt to subvert and destroy their system of worship and religion, and besought Pilate to order his crucifixion. Pilate, after examining the case, declared that he could find no fault in the man. But they clamored so strongly that he finally, with reluctance, consented, washed his hands, and gave him over to them to be crucified; which they forthwith did.

After the crucifixion, his friends who had heard his preaching knew that he was as pure and good a man as ever lived, that he had been most cruelly and unjustly put to death ; and when they saw with what a sublime composure he met the terrible ordeal, they began to think that he was something more than human,—that he must have had a divine nature. Soon stories were circulated that his body was missing from the sepulchre, and that he had been seen alive; and they came to the conclusion that he must be the Son of God, that he had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. And, as evidence of his divine nature, it was rumored that while living he had wrought miracles.

Now we may discard all the claims in regard to his miraculous origin, which he never claimed, and the resurrection. He was too good a man to think of imposing upon the people by attempting to work miracles, and many things were probably interpolated in his biographies, during the thirty or forty years that elapsed after the crucifixion before any gospel was published, which had no foundation in anything he taught or did: but his pure life, his tender sympathy for the suffering, his noble charity for the erring, his high standard of morals, his nice distinction between pretense and practice, truth and error, and between hypocrisy and charity, his famous sermon,

his plain, pointed and touching illustrations of truth, by his simple but inimitable parables, all proclaim a noble soul, and shine out with a beauty, loveliness and sublimity which command the respect, admiration and reverence of mankind. Let him be honored and held in grateful remembrance ; let the day of his birth be the most noted of the year, and let it be celebrated with "songs and dances," with joy and merriment, eulogy and praise, till the whole race of man shall be brought into sympathy with his true teachings, and the practice of his virtues.

But, great, good and worthy as Jesus was, he certainly was not the True Almighty God. He never claimed to be. But the unjust and cruel treatment he received for teaching real truth and true charity proves that the groundwork and foundation of the system that would not listen to, adopt, sustain and practice such preaching was false ; that it did not proceed from, and was not founded or authorized by, the True God.

After the crucifixion a party of Jews, including the disciples, upon thinking over what Moses and the prophets had written, concluded that this Jesus must be the Christ that they had dimly spoken of, that would be born of a Virgin and come to redeem Israel ; and that his crucifixion was the end of the law, and a perfect fulfillment of all imagined types and of all prophesies ; and

that through him salvation had come to a fallen world. They became very earnest and enthusiastic in this belief; and they were not selfish about it, either. They did not claim, as Moses did, all the benefits for their own race, but placed the Gentiles,—all mankind,—on the same level with themselves, entitled to share equally in all the blessings.

Soon, marvelous stories were circulated about miracles which it was rumored that Jesus had wrought; and it was claimed that he was the Son of God,—begotten by God,—and also that he had *risen from the dead*.

It was easy enough to induce people in that age to believe that Jesus was begotten by God, for in those days it was generally believed that gods and goddesses had intercourse with mortals. Greek and Roman histories related many cases of the kind, and it was (as one might say) an every-day occurrence. There had been many instances on earth, where divine and human natures were believed to have been united in the same person. Hence, it seemed no great mystery in the case of so good a man as Jesus, and it was readily believed as a matter of course.

Belief of the Resurrection was more difficult to establish. The evidence of that supposed event is the stories which are related in the four gospels attributed to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. It is by no means certain who wrote any of them,

or when or where they were written, or that they now retain their original shape. None of them were written in less than from thirty to forty years after the Crucifixion. But we will examine them as they now appear, and afterward speak of other matters relating to them.

The story contained in them is substantially as follows: In the evening of the day of the Crucifixion, *which was Friday*, one Joseph of Aramaea, with the permission of Pilate, took the body of Jesus. It was then naked, for the soldiers had stripped off the clothing and divided it among themselves. This Joseph bought linen, with which he enwrapped the body, laid it in a new sepulchre, closed the door, rolled a stone against it, and departed. Nothing further is said or known of Joseph. This left the sepulchre accessible, for the stone which Joseph rolled against the door with his own hands might be rolled away by a like instrumentality.

Very early, as early as sunrise if not earlier, on the morning of the first day of the week, which corresponds with our Sunday, and consequently *only about thirty-six hours after the body was laid in the sepulchre*, it is related that Mary Magdalene came to the sepulchre, found it open, and the body of Jesus gone. It is stated that she said she saw there, Matthew says, "an angel"; Mark says, "a young man"; Luke says, "two young men"; and

John says, "two angels," "clothed in long white garments," who told her "Jesus is risen." On turning to leave, she saw a person that she did not recognize. John says she thought he was "the gardener." (Of course, he was then clothed. Where did the clothes come from?) He spake and called her by name, and then, it is said, "she knew it was Jesus." And then, (according to Matthew, Mark and Luke,) he requested her to "go and tell his brethren who were in the city, and but a little way off, to go to Galilee and there they would see him." Mark says, that when Mary came and delivered the message, and told them that Jesus was alive and had been seen of her, "they believed not"; Luke says, "her words seemed as idle tales and they believed them not." Matthew, *alone*, says that "the disciples went to Galilee and saw Jesus," and worshiped (*i. e.*, saluted) him, "but some doubted."

This comprises about all that relates to what Mary said and did, according to Matthew, Mark, and Luke. We have nothing direct from Mary herself. And all that is contained in those Gospels about her is nothing but oral rumors about what she said, from at least thirty to forty years before either of them was written. If her story had been true, it is most likely there would have been more than a casual street meeting between them; and his mother and other friends of the

family, also, would certainly have received some notice of it.

The report that Jesus told her "to tell his brethren to go to Galilee," to meet him, is absurd. The alleged meeting and conversation between Jesus and Mary was near the sepulchre, and only a short walking distance from where his "brethren" were then known to be. He might have gone to them, or sent and invited them to come to him, or appointed some near-by place for a meeting and seen them in a few minutes. Mary found them quickly. And it is wholly incredible that he would, under the circumstances, have requested them to go way to Galilee, which was fifty or sixty miles from where they all then were, to meet him. This has a tendency to show that there was a design on the part of Mary, or some one else, to work a scheme and create a false impression.

None of the other evangelists mention or allude to any such meeting in Galilee, and if what all three of them agree in stating is true, no such meeting could have occurred. For, in addition to the statement of Mark and Luke, that "the brethren" did not believe Mary, and, consequently, would not have acted on her statement, Mark, Luke and John all agree in saying that there was a meeting of "The Eleven" in the evening of the same day, that is, only about forty-eight hours after Jesus was laid in the sepul-

chre, at their usual place of meeting in Jerusalem ; and when the door was shut, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in their midst, implying, of course, that he had passed through solid matter to get in.

And those evangelists also say that when he appeared “ they (the disciples) were terrified and affrighted,” and supposed they had seen a spirit ; but that he calmed their fears, and to prove that he was not a spirit, requested them “ to handle him,” and said to them, “ A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” And to further convince them he called for “ meat,” and ate some “ broiled fish and honey comb ” before them. This is a strange commingling of evidence, to prove,—first, that he was a spirit that could pass through solid matter without affecting it, and immediately show that his body was composed of flesh and bones, and that he could eat.

After this meeting Mark says he was taken up into heaven, but gives no particulars. But Luke says that after the meeting “ he (Jesus) led them out as far as Bethany.” This might have been rather late in the evening, but could not have been more than from fifty to fifty-one or two hours after he was laid in the sepulchre. And “ there he lifted up his hands and blessed them, and while he blessed them he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.” Now this

certainly is what Luke at the time he wrote, (which was about forty years after the crucifixion,) supposed and believed the fact to be. And that fixes the *time* when, it must have been then, at the time he wrote, generally understood and believed that the ascension occurred, in the evening of the second day after the crucifixion. Luke certainly never heard or believed that Jesus was seen by anybody alive after that evening ; nor did Matthew or Mark, or they would have mentioned it.

There can be no doubt that there was a meeting of "The Eleven" on that evening, to wit, the evening of the day of the alleged resurrection. It was at the usual time and place, when and where they were accustomed to meet and dine together. And if, as Luke says, Jesus ascended on that same evening, immediately after that meeting, the evidence is conclusive that the meeting in Galilee that Matthew speaks of could not have occurred. For it is impossible that the brethren could have gone to Galilee, fifty miles away, had a meeting there with Jesus, and returned so as to be present at that meeting in Jerusalem on the evening of the same day, and immediately after which meeting the ascension occurred. This is not a case where different witnesses give different accounts of the same transactions, all of which may be true ; but this

is the case of an alibi, where if one statement be true the other cannot possibly be true. The statement in Matthew's gospel, therefore, is certainly erroneous. No such meeting as there spoken of could possibly have occurred.

Yet Matthew was one of "The Eleven," and must have known of the meeting in Jerusalem, and all that occurred at it. The only solution to the discrepancy about the meeting in Galilee is, that Matthew did not write that part of that Gospel, if any. It must have been written by some one that was not inspired as to facts.

It is to be remarked, also, as affecting the credibility of the gospel of Matthew relating to the resurrection, that it evinces too strong a disposition on the part of the writer, whoever he was, to ascribe miraculous intervention of angels and almighty power, *without the least proof*, to acts that were within the power of human agencies. Therefore he gratuitously assumes that "there was a great earthquake," and that "an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone from the door, and sat upon it." The writer of that part of the gospel was not there, and could not have known, personally, how the stone was rolled away, or what happened there. He simply assumes the fact, without any evidence except, perhaps, idle gossip; and it was evidently done to create a

belief that there were miraculous appearances at the sepulchre. Whereas, if Jesus could enter the room where his disciples were, while the door was shut, he might have found his way out of the sepulchre in the same way, without troubling an angel to roll back the stone, and in spite of the Roman guard, too.

That disposition to imagine miracles, and heap one upon another, probably had the desired effect in those days; but as looked upon now it has a strong tendency to discredit the whole story. Considering, then, the improbability that Jesus, if risen, would have sent a request to his brethren, who were then within a short walk of him, to go off fifty miles into the country in order to meet him, together with the fact that no other evangelist speaks of or alludes to such a meeting, and that there was a meeting of The Eleven at Jerusalem on the evening of that day, we may dismiss all that that gospel says about the meeting in Galilee as unworthy of belief. As Matthew says nothing about any other meeting, or of the ascension, we may conclude that he, although one of "The Eleven," did not know of any meeting of Jesus with his disciples; and therefore he furnishes no evidence touching the resurrection, except his report of the vague rumors about what Mary Magdalene said, with the fact standing out that the disciples did not believe her when she

told them that "Jesus was alive, and had been seen of her."

The next thing to be considered is the meeting of "The Eleven" at Jerusalem, on the evening of the day of the alleged resurrection, at which Mark and Luke say, that while "they sat at meat," and the door was shut, Jesus appeared among them, and after the close of that meeting ascended up to heaven. There can be no doubt there was a meeting of "The Eleven" on that evening. It was a usual meeting of "The Eleven," where they were accustomed to dine together. The fact that there was a meeting is one thing, but what occurred at the meeting is a very different question. Neither Mark or Luke was of "The Eleven," and neither of them was present at that meeting; for it was a meeting only of "The Eleven," at their usual dinner; hence, neither Mark nor Luke could have had any personal knowledge of what occurred. If they wrote the gospels attributed to them, they did not write until forty or fifty years after the supposed event; and then wrote, not what they personally knew, but only what others had told them, and do not state from whom they received information. Their gospels are only the gathering up or compiling of rumors that had been floating about for forty years. An effort has been made to show that there was a record from which the stories of the evangelists were taken; but

there is no proof that any such thing ever existed: therefore, the testimony of Mark and Luke as to what occurred at that meeting is at best only the hearsay evidence of floating rumors.

Matthew was one of "The Eleven," and must have been at that meeting, and must have known what took place; and the fact that he does not mention or allude to it is strong evidence that nothing occurred at the meeting out of the ordinary course of things at their dinners. If Jesus had appeared, and all those remarkable things had followed that Mark and Luke speak of, they could not have been forgotten, and Matthew certainly would have said something about them. This negative evidence, this silence of Matthew and others of "The Eleven," who must have known all that happened at that meeting, is of far more weight than the testimony of Mark and Luke, who were not present, and did not personally know what took place, but recorded only what they had heard from others. So that, in fact, there is no reliable evidence thus far that either the meeting in Galilee took place, or that Jesus appeared to his disciples at the meeting in Jerusalem, on the evening of the day of the alleged resurrection, or at any other time or place.

And it must not be lost sight of, that these gospels were not hurriedly written, on the spur of the moment, immediately after the happening of

the events they pretend to record ; but the writers all had at least from thirty to forty years to think over what they would write. The probability is that they wrote personally only a part, if any, of what is attributed to them, and that the originals were afterwards changed and altered, by additions, interpolations and excisions, by unknown and irresponsible hands, into the shape in which they now appear ; and we have no reliable knowledge of what they in fact originally wrote. At the best, all those gospels are only compilations of floating rumors. This covers all that is said about the resurrection in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke,—all the so-called synoptic gospels ; and our verdict on that evidence must be *Not proved*.

The gospel, according to John, agrees with Mark and Luke about the meeting at Jerusalem on the evening of the day of the alleged resurrection, and says there was another meeting eight days after, at which Jesus appeared in the same way that he is said to have appeared at the first meeting, and convinced Thomas, who was not present at the first meeting. If this is true, it would disprove what Luke says about the ascension : and if this second meeting occurred, at which Jesus appeared, Matthew and the rest of “The Eleven” must have known of it, and Mark and Luke must at least have heard of it, and some of them would have spoken of it. But neither Mark,

Luke, Matthew nor Thomas, nor any other of "The Eleven," says a word about it, and that fact is strong evidence that no such thing occurred.

Besides, if John's gospel is to be credited, it would prove that the disciples did not think it important to stay around Jerusalem, and try to have more meetings with Jesus, for six or seven of them got up a fishing excursion and went up to the Sea of Tiberias, sixty miles from Jerusalem, a-fishing. There they took a ship, went out and toiled all night, and caught nothing. In the morning, being only two or three hundred feet from land, they saw a man on shore that they did not recognize, who hailed them and asked if they had "any meat," (meaning, Had they caught any fish?) They replied, "No." He then told them to cast their net on the right side of the ship. They did so, and immediately the net was filled with fishes, and to such an extent that they could not draw it aboard the vessel; so they dragged it ashore and found they had caught "a hundred and fifty-three" large fishes. Then they saw a fire of coals burning, and fish laid thereon. Presently, the stranger said to them, "Come and dine." None of them durst ask him, "Who art thou? for they knew it was Jesus." This statement contradicts itself, for it is evident they did not recognize him as Jesus. "He took bread and gave them, and fish also." Then the Evan-

gelist says, "This is now the *third* time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead." This, of course, reads out Matthew's account of a meeting in Galilee. For, although the Sea of Tiberias is in Galilee, the meeting at the seaside does not correspond in any manner with the meeting that Matthew speaks of. Now this covers all that is said in the four gospels upon the alleged resurrection.

This last story attributed to John, in its details, circumstances and surroundings, smacks a little too much of the business the disciples were then engaged in. The idea that Jesus followed and appeared to them on that fishing excursion, and acted in the manner detailed, was a little too much for the early fathers of the Church to swallow, and they did not believe that John, the "beloved disciple," had anything to do with that gospel, notwithstanding it is said in the 24th verse of the last chapter, "This is the disciple which testifieth of these things and wrote these things." It is supposed that that was falsely added to enhance its credit.

John, the disciple, was over ninety years old when the gospel was written, and was very decrepit in mind and body. But there was another John at Ephesus, where the disciple was stationed, known as John the elder. And it was believed by those then in a position to judge, that this

John the elder, and several other persons acting with him, compiled that gospel from oral traditions that had come to their ears during the sixty years following the crucifixion, and that John the disciple had nothing to do with it. It was a final compilation of all vague rumors, and the setting forth of certain mystic mythical mysteries which were then considered necessary to perfect a system of religion. But learned critics, knowing the great age and decrepit condition of the Apostle John at the time it was written, after closely comparing the style with his other known writings, and taking all the circumstances into consideration, came to the conclusion that John the disciple did not write it; and the early fathers of the Church did not receive and credit it as having been written or authorized by him. But after one or two hundred years, however, it was canonized by the Christians, and declared by them to be inspired. It suited the then prevailing notions. That is the way they manufactured evidence in those days. But this fact can amount to nothing in the eye of reason and common sense. Sufficient doubt and uncertainty are cast upon it to destroy it as credible and convincing evidence to prove such a miracle as the resurrection.

A similar doubt and uncertainty shade all the other gospels. There can be no doubt that none of them are in exactly their original shape, and

there is no knowing when, where, or by whom they were written, or how much they have been changed since they were first written. Then, assuming that John the disciple did not write the gospel attributed to him, and excepting what is said in Matthew's gospel about a meeting in Galilee, which cannot possibly be true, we have no account of any meeting of Jesus with his disciples after the crucifixion that was either written or sanctioned by any of "The Eleven," or any body that was present, and an eye witness of any such meeting. No one that pretended personally to have seen him or heard him talk has written a word on the subject. All we have is a gathering up and compiling by outside parties of vague rumors, not written and published till forty years after the crucifixion. Peter and James wrote epistles, but neither says a word about any of the meetings that Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John speak of. And all that the enthusiastic Paul says on the subject of Jesus being seen by any body is obviously only hearsay. The superstitious elements in his nature, as in millions of other people before and since, induced him to believe great miracles on a kind of evidence that would not be admitted to prove an allegation in a suit at law.

About seventy-six years before the crucifixion the greatest and one of the best of mortals was most ignominiously stabbed to death by senators

on the floor of the Roman Senate chamber. This monstrous crime appalled society, and aroused all the inventive powers of superstition to the highest pitch. Community was filled with rumors of miraculous events,—prodigies in the sky, among the stars; strange and unnatural appearances in the entrails of animals offered in sacrifice; and it was also believed

“ That graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead  
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.”

A similar shock was experienced by his friends, when the pure and lovely Jesus was suddenly snatched from them, and cruelly, brutally crucified before their eyes. Then again frenzied superstition imagined and believed that there were miraculous occurrences,—that there were earthquakes in divers places, that rocks were rent, and “ that graves were opened, and that many bodies of saints that slept arose, and came out of the graves, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.” [ *Vide* Matt. xxvii: 52, 53.] None of those saints, however, were ever identified. Such were the wild assumptions and beliefs of a superstitious people, smarting under that terrible affliction. The friends of Jesus believed that he rose from the dead and ascended up to heaven, and there became a God. And so the Romans before them believed that the Great Cæsar ascended up to heaven and became a God, as many

a great hero before him had done. It is impossible to determine what could be too absurd and preposterous for superstition to imagine and believe, under such or similar circumstances ; it is simply a psychological mystery.

The same kind of superstitious belief may be traced in all ages to the present time. There is hardly a city or important town in this country, or perhaps in the world, but has some legend or remarkable story about some house or locality being haunted ; thousands of good people believe in ghosts, strange apparitions of persons that have been murdered or unjustly put to death. The same kind of stories were probably fabricated by his superstitious friends about Jesus, and were the foundation, and all the foundation there ever was, for all that has since been said about his resurrection. But all of them lack reasonable proof. When fairly sifted down, it will be found that there is nothing to support them but hearsay evidence and vague rumors, like all ghost stories among a superstitious people, in a superstitious age, frenzied and distracted by the cruel death of a very dear and most worthy friend. Hence, to sum it all up, there is no fairly credible and convincing evidence that Jesus was ever seen alive by any one after the crucifixion ; no evidence of a kind that would sustain an allegation of fact in a Court of Justice, let alone the miraculousness of the question here involved.

Jesus was a firm believer in Moses and the prophets, and as the existence of Hell, and a great personal Devil, who once lived in Heaven, was not at all recognized in their system, it is incredible that Jesus should have had any such belief in regard to them as is indicated in the gospels. All that is said or alluded to about them in the gospels, as coming from or pertaining to Jesus, was probably inserted and interwoven after his death, without any authority from him, or from any of his real teachings. They doubtless were all unauthorized fabrications, designed to support the new doctrine in regard to the immortality of the soul, which the Christians after the crucifixion received from the Gentiles ; and they created the Devil and Hell to supply the place of the heathen Pluto and Hades, which were not terrible and fearful enough to suit them. It is true that about the time the Greeks began to preach immortality, that a sect arose among the Jews called the Pharisees, who believed in a resurrection, while the Sadducees did not. But none of these things disturbed the even working of the regular Hebraic system. They were all separate, private, personal, and individual concerns ; and it may well be that on this question Jesus adopted the belief of the Pharisees. But they did not go so far as to imagine a big personal Devil, or a future terrible Hell. That was all the work of

the Christians, long after the death of Jesus, and he is not responsible for them.

Considering then the facts, that the gospels are only compilations of vague rumors, oral traditions and legends, that none of them were compiled in less than from thirty to forty years after the crucifixion, that the authors are not known to a certainty, that the originals have undoubtedly been greatly changed by additions, interpolations, and excisions; the improbabilities, inconsistencies, and contradictions contained in them, we must conclude that they constitute but a very frail foundation on which to build a belief of such a miracle as the resurrection.

It is contended by some that many things are purposely left obscure, uncertain and doubtful, to give an opportunity to exercise faith. Faith in what? Faith in what never happened? Faith in what is not and cannot be proved? Faith in confused, inconsistent stories about miracles? Faith in wild, flying rumors? Faith in absurd and improbable stories, which it was rumored that a woman told forty years before any of them were put in writing? A woman, too, out of whom it was said seven devils had been cast, and might have had many more left? If faith is such a predominant, all-overriding, supreme virtue, suppose we turn the tables a little, and say: I have faith in God, faith in his integrity, faith that he is ever true to

himself and his own character, faith that he keeps his laws and the laws of nature inviolate, faith that he would not allow them to be violated, broken, and set at naught to work miracles. How would that kind of faith answer? Such a faith, it seems, does not answer the purposes of religion and never did. Religion is not satisfied with faith in God. His glorious works and ways, the even, constant and sublime working of his laws, are not sufficient for the purposes of religion. Religion requires that those laws shall be reversed, broken, violated. It calls for Miracles—Miracles—that is the only food that will sustain religion. It must have miracles, and not real miracles either. They would not answer the entire purpose so well. It must be faith in absurd and ridiculous rumors of miracles, invented by priests and designing persons to foster superstition. This kind of miracles is better than the pure article,—Faith in Moses, faith in the prophets, and faith in all succeeding impostors, faith in the everlasting torments of unbelievers; that is what religion feeds on, that is its life-blood, the vitalizing principle, what it depends upon for its support, and it cannot live without it. True faith in the True God would give a sure death-blow to it all.

Besides, if the resurrection were a fact, and it was important that mankind should believe it, infinite wisdom and goodness certainly would not

have left the proof of it to vague and uncertain rumors, inconsistent and contradictory oral reports, to be gathered up from doubtful sources, and not published till forty years after the event. He would have adopted some more certain, convincing and adequate means to prove and establish the fact beyond doubt or cavil. It is not pretended that Jesus made any attempt to show himself except to Mary Magdalene and his disciples,—all interested friends. He did not even notice his mother. And all the meetings he is represented to have had with his disciples, setting aside all the uncertainties, inconsistencies, and contradictions in the stories, were in the night; all secret, clandestine, and miraculous of themselves. The ascension was in the night. It is not stated where he lodged or kept himself during the intervals of those meetings, if there was more than one, or that there was any effort made to see more of him. But after the second meeting that John speaks of, as it appears from that gospel, not regarding the fact that he was somewhere about Jerusalem, seven of them went off to the Sea of Tiberias, sixty miles away, on a fishing excursion.

Jesus certainly could not have had any fear of anything more that man could do unto him, and he might have gone boldly to Pilate, who was kindly disposed toward him, and convinced him; or he might have gone into the temple or the

synagogues, and publicly proclaimed his resurrection. In some such way the fact might have been proved and established beyond a doubt, in the presence of disinterested witnesses. As he is represented in the gospels, he does not appear to have been inclined to show himself at Jerusalem to anybody but this Mary Magdalene and his disciples, at night, and in a very secret and mysterious manner ; did not even call upon his mother. This shunning and avoiding everybody else, all open public demonstrations, and neglecting to put himself in the way to have the fact then and there established by disinterested, straight-forward, sure and convincing evidence, and an abundance of it, is strong proof that he did not rise from the dead.

It has been cunningly argued that any such attempt to convince the Pharisees or Sadducees would have been useless, because they were pre-determined not to believe, did not want to believe, and would not have believed under any circumstances. With all due deference, (which is very small,) it may be boldly and confidently asserted that there was not then living a human being of ordinary intelligence, from the cruel and beastly Emperor then on the throne, down to the humblest Roman citizen, nor a Pharisee or Sadducee, or anybody else, who would not have been *more than glad to be* convinced of a resurrection

of the dead. There is nothing which mankind could be so delighted and so rejoiced to know. Everything else would have dwindled into insignificance in comparison with it. Crowns and scepters would have been right willingly thrown down, and the kingdom of Christ would have been at once established throughout the whole world.

In the entire absence of all such proof, the uncertain, inconsistent, and contradictory compilations of the rumors, gossips, verbal reports, and stories that were floating about and accumulating in a superstitious age for forty years next following the crucifixion, are not sufficient to warrant the belief of such a miracle as the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. So, if he in fact rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven, he certainly did not leave behind him any reasonably fair convincing evidence of it, nor has he furnished any since.

## CHAPTER VII.

ORIGIN OF THE DEVIL, HELL, AND THE SCHEME  
OF REDEMPTION.

WHETHER true or false, the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, Resurrection, and Ascension gained believers among the faithful Jews. Its advocates scrutinized and expounded the writings of Moses and the prophets, and claimed to prove by them that Jesus must be the Christ, the one that Moses saw by faith, as was said, who would bruise the head of the Serpent; that he was born of a Virgin, that it was necessary for him to suffer crucifixion as he had done, and that he would build up a new and better kingdom. It was all claimed to be founded upon the Mosaic dispensation, and evolved directly from it, and depended wholly upon the belief that the God which Moses had set up was the only living and True God — the same one he saw on Mount Sinai, and had daily interviews with in Egypt and through the wilderness, and that promised to assist the Israelites to murder and cut off all of the inhabitants of Canaan, and give them all their land, and who had all the traits of human character which Moses and his followers ascribed to him.

He had always been a true, faithful, and exclusive God of the Israelites. But now he had become a father, had a son of his own named Jesus, and, thenceforth, he would favor and be the God of those only, whether Jew or Gentile, who would *believe* that this Jesus was his son, was the true Christ spoken of by the prophets, and would join heart and hand to help him to build up a kingdom on earth.

In a little while, a belief in the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments, were engrafted on the system. This was not in the Mosaic system, and evidently was never thought of by Moses, nor did he pretend that God ever spoke of it to him. It has been claimed that life and immortality were brought to light through the gospel. But this is a mistake; for immortality and future rewards and punishments had been taught by the Greeks and Romans for centuries, and some of the demi-gods that were rumored to have lived on earth were permitted to visit the home of departed souls. So this doctrine came bodily from the Gentile believers in Jesus, and as the supposed resurrection and ascension of Jesus seemed to prove it, it was adopted without objection.

While the Christians were contented to receive the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and future rewards and punishments, from the heathen

Gentiles, they were not satisfied to accept their Hades for a hell or their Pluto for a devil; Hades was too near by, somewhere under Italy, or thereabouts, and all departed souls had to go there indiscriminately, and, by a very fair and impartial judge, were assigned to different places, according to real merit. Then Pluto was not a devil, by any means. He was a God,—with good family connections,—was a brother of Jupiter and Neptune, on good terms with both, and behaved himself just as well as other gods. Hades was his kingdom. He had no such gorgeous throne as Satan had in his Hell, which, for splendor,

“far

Outshone the wealth of Ormus and of Ind,”

but a plain, modest throne, made of sulphur, (*i. e.*, brimstone,) and it was not on fire; there was no lake of fire and brimstone anywhere about.

Such things would not answer the purposes of the Christians. It was necessary for them to have a real, big, earnest Devil, and a remote, terrible lake of fire and brimstone for a Hell, to scare sinners, and make them shell out money to support the church, and pray their souls out of the clutches of the Devil after death. As Moses had made no mention of his creation, and given no hint of the existence of any such place as Hell, they had to invent and create those things for themselves and for their own use. And as they had

it all in their own power and did all the work, they made a Hell and a Devil just to suit themselves.

How, when, where, and by whom this business was first started is involved in mystery. There were Grecian scholars among the Christians who were familiar with the mythological accounts of the wars of the Titans against Saturn, and of the Giants against Jupiter, and they undoubtedly employed this knowledge and their ingenuity to Christianize those legends, and with them fabricate the story that there had been a war in the Christian heaven. The manner in which it is reported to have been carried on, and the style of fighting, are so identical with the mythological battles, there can be no doubt that the one was suggested by the other, and that both had the same heathen origin.

It was readily perceived that such a war would be a very good way to create a terrible Hell, a first-class Devil, and lay a good foundation for a great scheme of redemption ; hence, the idea was adopted as a necessary part of the Christian faith. And, in fact, it was the most important part of it, for without it they could have no Hell, no Devil, and a scheme of salvation could have no foundation, nothing to act upon, and would be as useless as a sawmill in a treeless desert, where there could be nothing to saw. The main ideas were seized

and acted upon, but the complete legend was a long time in forming and assuming definite shape.

At length, however, about two hundred and fifty years ago, John Milton, a learned man, studied it out, and perfected the form and shape of the tradition in precisely the same way that *all* the traditions which Moses relates were originally formed by himself and his ignorant ancestors ; and that was by drawing upon the imagination for facts, while Milton was aided by heathen mythology for his imagery.

The "Paradise Lost" has great merit as a poem. It shows extensive learning, great intellectual ability, and a poetic genius in its author that has not been excelled but by a very few, if any. But the story is a pure fiction, an ingenuous twisting and contortion of Grecian mythology, and has no more foundation in fact and truth than the stories in the Arabian Nights, or any other work of *pure* fiction ; yet it is believed by many to be God's truth.

It is of great importance to examine this story thoroughly and seriously, for on it is founded all there is of Hell, a personal Devil, and the great scheme of Redemption, that is so much talked about. It is the only story that fully accounts for the origin of any such things, and without it they could not possibly have any standing or foundation whatever. Besides, this story of Mil-

ton has been, and probably is now, believed by the Christian world as fully and implicitly as *any* of the traditions that Moses relates, and is doubtless just as true, and just as worthy of belief.

As the story goes, somewhere about the time God is said to have placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, a terrible war broke out in heaven. A few discontented spirits raised a great rebellion in those celestial regions, with the dire intent to dethrone God, usurp his government, and reign in his stead. The principal leaders in this conspiracy were Satan, Moloch, Belial, Mammon and Beelzebub, who up to that time had been the boon companions, and stood very high in the favor of God. Their power and influence may be inferred from the fact that they are said to have drawn to their side one-third of all the powers and hosts of heaven.

The armies on both sides were very soon marshalled, thoroughly drilled, and fully prepared for the great struggle. Their arms, of course, consisted for the most part of spirit weapons, spirit swords and lances, and spirit engines and artillery ; but during the battle it is said that God's warriors " seized hills and mountains by their shaggy tops," tore them up from their roots, and hurled them at their enemies just as the warriors of Saturn and Jupiter did. After some skirmishing the armies met in earnest, and fought with

most determined bravery and courage on both sides. The chances of victory varied from time to time, sometimes on one side and then on the other. The battle raged for three days; but at length on the third day God's dear Son, "grasping ten thousand thunders," made a desperate charge in person upon the enemy, and single-handed and alone drove them all out over the battlements of heaven into open space, where there was nothing to lodge against or fall upon. Consequently there was nothing to do but fall. So they fell, and kept on falling for nine days, and from that circumstance they are known and called "fallen spirits," "fallen angels," etc. In nine days the momentum ceased and they came to a halt, and the place where they are supposed to have stopped is called Hell. The world has been filled with most awful stories about it. Poets and divines have racked their imaginations to describe and paint its horrors. But those fallen spirits seem to have been pretty well satisfied with it, although they had been accustomed to better things: first, on the ground that "it was better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven"; and, second, because they considered it a good place to plot mischief against their great enemy. Satan was the acknowledged chief or king, and from that fact is recognized and known as the *great Devil*, once a particular friend and associate of

God, but now a terribly depraved being, going about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour ; and the capitol or seat of his empire, which astronomy has not yet been able to locate, is called Hell. Such is the origin of the Christian Devil and Hell, and neither ever had any other or different origin.

The fallen spirits were conquered but not subdued, for they still breathed revenge and defiance, and considered Hell as a good place to plot and plan schemes to vex and annoy their great adversary, and with a possible chance that they might eventually overcome him, or drive him into some desperate condition, and compel a reasonable compromise.

About this time, as the story goes, God had created Adam and Eve, by whom he expected to raise an innumerable race of intelligent beings, who would ever be willing and ready to love, honor and worship him, and sing his praises. He laid out a beautiful garden, "with walks and shades, fit haunt for gods," which he called Paradise ; ornamented it with flowers, filled it with trees bearing every kind of fruit that could please the eye, or that was good for food, and placed them in it, "to dress it and to keep it," and enjoy themselves. If he had done nothing more, probably everything would have gone right. But impelled, of course, by infinite wisdom and goodness, he planted in the midst of the garden a certain

other tree, which bore fruit that was most tempting of all to the eye, but forbade them to touch it. Those innocent beings undoubtedly looked upon it with great longing. Their mouths watered to taste it, and the prohibition probably increased their desire. But when God placed them there he told them, "Of every tree in the Garden thou mayst freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil which is in the midst of the garden thou shalt not eat, for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." With this injunction he left them to themselves, and went home to heaven.

It seems a little singular that this God, possessed, as it is claimed, of infinite wisdom, and having millions of cherubim and seraphim, all warlike spirits, around his throne, with nothing to do but sing his praises, and knowing the desperate character of the beings he had expelled from heaven, and sent out to roam the universe, did not detail a few of those warlike spirits to guard that beautiful Garden and those innocent beings against the wiles and schemes of such adversaries. He could have spared and surrounded the place with legions, that would have been delighted to fight their hated enemies. But he did nothing of the kind.

The rebel spirits held a council of war. Satan was seated "high on his throne of royal state," and the members of his cabinet were all present.

Each delivered a speech upon the general situation, and particularly upon the question as to how they might most vex and annoy their great enemy, and, if possible, overpower him, or defeat some of his schemes. Moloch was for open war. Belial and Mammon were more politic. They were opposed to a useless war, and advised to try and make themselves comfortable where they were. But Beelzebub suggested there was

“Another world, the happy seat  
Of some new race called man,”

and advised that they had better bend their thoughts to learn what kind of creatures lived there, and what might be done, “by force or subtlety,” to interfere and thwart God’s plan in regard to them. This gave universal satisfaction. The scheme was adopted, and Satan at once volunteered to attend to the business single-handed and alone. At this the trumpets blew, and all Hell resounded with acclamations and loud applause. Satan immediately started on the mission, and so became our Great Devil.

He landed upon this planet, readily found Paradise, hopped over the high walls without let or hindrance, and perched high up on the tree of life, and “there sat like a cormorant,” surveying the field, and planning his attack. Soon he is in the bower

“Squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve,”

inspiring her with naughty dreams. After awhile he assumes the form of an erect, fascinating, and beguiling serpent, and manages to meet Eve as she is walking alone, and enters into conversation with her. He directs her attention to the "fruit of that forbidden tree," and wonders why she does not partake of it. She informed him, "God has said to us, Ye shall not eat of it lest ye die; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." Since we have discovered the origin of Satan, and that he was the serpent, a fact which Moses never heard of, we may substitute his name. So Satan said to her, "Ye shall not surely die," for "God knows that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." He thus contradicted what God told them. Satan's council prevailed with Eve, and, as the poet puts it,

" Her rash hand in evil hour  
Forth reaching to the fruit, she pluck'd, she ate,  
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,  
Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe  
That all was lost."

It seems that Satan was the most truthful. It did not kill her, but, on the contrary, she had never "tasted such delight," and she hastened to take some of the fruit to Adam, and easily persuaded him to eat also. The awful crime was then committed,—the terrible fatal deed was done,

This is Adam's fall, the fall of man, which occasioned the great scheme of Redemption. Now, taking the Bible view of the matter, what did God do about it? The only account that was ever attempted to be given before the Christian era of what God did, is in the third chapter of Genesis. Soon after this transgression, God was "heard walking in the Garden in the cool of day"; discovered what had been done, and called them to account. Adam excuses himself by saying, "The woman thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat"; and Eve said, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat"; and so the fault was passed from one to another.

Now, if God had then immediately, on that very day, killed them both, as he said he would, or retired them, and allowed them to live and die childless, and started with a new pair, all trouble, *if there was any*, would have ended then and there, and no scheme of Redemption involving the crucifixion of God could have been founded upon it. But what did he do? He first doomed the *serpent to crawl*. It is most likely, if there is any truth in the story, that God knew as well as modern divines whether this serpent was only a snake, a cunning beast, or whether it was Satan. According to Moses, he treated it as a *snake*, and never intimated that Satan had anything to do with the matter. And the punish-

ments pronounced upon Adam and Eve were personal to themselves alone, and there is not the slightest intimation that their posterity would be held responsible for it, or in any way affected by it. All to the contrary is a mere fiction of priesthood, and there could not be, and is not, the slightest foundation for it in justice, reason, or even in the Bible, or any tradition.

Besides, if the posterity of Adam and Eve should possibly have been rendered any way responsible, the total destruction, that is claimed, of all mankind by the flood would have been ample expiation. But, notwithstanding all this, modern priesthood insists that the sin of Adam, which was caused by Satan, affected all his posterity, and rendered it necessary for God to devise a scheme of redemption, which involved the necessity that either he himself or his dear Son, who was in every respect his equal, should at some convenient time appear in person on earth, in a human form, as a poor mendicant, be spit upon and scourged and crucified by men, as the only way divine wisdom could devise to render it possible for a small portion of mankind to be cleansed of the sin Adam committed centuries before they were born ; and as to personal sins, be placed in a condition to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. But that even this scheme would not be of any avail, except to those who

heartily believe that it would be or had been fully carried out by the crucifixion of Jesus ; involving, of course, a belief that Jesus was in truth and fact the truly begotten Son of God, etc.

The theory of the scheme is : First, that all the posterity of Adam are equally guilty with him for his act of disobedience, and for it richly deserve everlasting punishment. Second, that by some queer fiction of divine law the suffering and crucifixion of a human body, into which God or his dear Son might temporarily concentrate himself, (he being immortal,) would be equivalent to the everlasting punishment of all mortals. That in this way the law, which required their everlasting punishment, would be fully vindicated and expiated, so that God would appear to have justly executed the penalty, and could of free grace justify and save harmless all who truly believe that he has so suffered and been crucified ; but that it can be of no avail to those who do not so believe.

It is certain that no such scheme was ever published or made known to man before the Christian Era, notwithstanding the talk about the faith of the old patriarchs ; none of them ever heard a word about it. There is no historic fact or plausible tradition to support it. It is founded wholly upon the arrogant assumptions of modern divines, which are nothing but priestcraft aided by Grecian

mythology and poetic imagination. The assumptions are :

1st. That they have discovered something that their God never thought of, and that is, that the serpent which beguiled Eve was not a snake, as God supposed he was, but Satan himself, the great rebel, that was expelled from heaven, and so disguised that God did not recognize him.

2nd. That the punishment which God pronounced upon Adam and Eve was not severe enough ; and they have taken the liberty to amend his judgment, and insert, in place of the punishment he pronounced, everlasting damnation for them and all their posterity.

3rd. That God has heretofore had trouble in his family circles, as mortals often have ; that in consequence there was once a terrible war in heaven, which resulted in the expulsion of many of his most intimate and influential friends, who afterwards gathered in some outside locality which made a hell ; and that the chief rebel then became the Great Devil, who afterwards, by his wiles, caused the disobedience of Adam, which necessitated the adoption of the scheme of redemption that involved the necessary crucifixion of God or his only Son.

Such are the assumptions of modern divines, and the pages of heathen mythology furnish no parallel to them for superstitious and ridiculous absurdity.

Of course, it all hinges upon the question whether there ever was a war in heaven, and an expulsion therefrom of some of its former inhabitants. If there was no war, then there is no Devil and no Hell, and the scheme of Redemption falls to the ground; for without a hell, a place of everlasting punishment, there could be no use for it,—nothing to which it could be applied. It would be like the aforesaid sawmill in a desert where there was nothing to saw.

But the scheme of itself contains many absurdities which clearly betray its human origin.

1st. To make men guilty or amenable for sins committed by their ancestors, before they were born, would be the use and gross abuse of arbitrary power, of which the True God could not possibly be guilty.

2nd. No such punishment is intimated, or can be reasonably inferred, from the sentence God is reported to have pronounced upon Adam and Eve. It was all personal to themselves alone, and no mention is made of their posterity.

3rd. If the general of an army should be so outwitted, outgeneraled, and driven to such straits in order to save a few of his soldiers, as to render it necessary for him to deliver himself up to the enemy to be crucified, common intelligence would conclude that he was pretty thoroughly whipped. Did Satan so outgeneral and outwit God Almighty?

4th. Well knowing the kind of beings he banished from heaven, and that they would certainly do all in their power to vex and annoy him, it would show a negligence, want of sagacity, and ability to govern on the part of God which would disgrace a militia officer, not to effectually guard and defend Paradise and the innocent beings he placed there against the wiles of such an adversary, and with that tempting tree in full view. The True God would not have been guilty of such negligence.

5th. Another evidence that the scheme was not devised by infinite wisdom is the fact that its efficacy is made to depend upon *belief*. It made it a necessary condition that this remarkable story should be believed by men endowed with reason, or all that suffering would have no saving effect. Then, what is *belief*? Belief is an involuntary operation of the mind, depending upon and controlled by evidence, and of itself has no moral quality whatever. If the evidence presented, no matter whether it be strong or weak, true or false, be such as to convince and convict, and it does convict, the mind cannot fail to believe. It has no choice in the matter, is not its own master in that respect, and the will cannot control it. It must and will believe. Whereas, on the contrary, if the evidence does not convince, is so mixed up with strange and unnatural occurrences and prop-

ositions as to confound the judgment, the mind cannot believe, though threatened with the rack or faggot, or hell-fire: such threats may make hypocrites, but not true believers. Therefore; belief has no moral quality, any more than the beating of the heart, the winking of the eye, or any other involuntary motion or emotion. And to make the efficacy of a scheme of salvation to depend upon such an involuntary action, having no moral character, shows that it could not have been devised by infinite wisdom.

6th. It is impossible to believe that the true God, who has untold millions of worlds to take care of,—one who must be at one and the same time and always present at each and every point in his vast dominions,—could, or would if he could, concentrate himself for years in a human body on this planet, to be spit upon, scourged and crucified to save man from any merited punishment. Besides, if he could and did, he certainly could not have suffered any pain in the act. It is impossible that God should suffer pain at all; certainly, not more at any one time than at all times, for he is unchangeable. And the idea that God could die or suffer pain is too absurd and ridiculous to be thought of.

7th. Justice could not be satisfied by the punishment of the just for the unjust. It cannot be satisfied with simply *so much suffering*, but re-

quires that the guilty should bear it, and that is more absolutely necessary than the suffering itself.

8th. No human being could commit an act that could justly merit everlasting torment. Punishment can be justly inflicted only for the purpose of example, or for reformation, and eternal torment could not answer for either.

These considerations are sufficient to prove that the great scheme of redemption is not of Divine origin; and when we find that it is founded upon and has nothing whatever to support it but the theory that there has been a war in heaven, which is a ridiculous absurdity,—only a distortion and attempt to christianize heathen mythology, we must come to the conclusion that it is nothing but an invention of priestcraft.

To say that the stories in Genesis are allegorical or symbolic—that the language is mystic—that they do not say what they mean, and are not to be understood literally as they read, but that they contain a hidden meaning, which requires interpretation and explanation, only makes the matter still worse. This would prove that they were designed so as to require the services of a hired priesthood, pretending to be inspired by God, to interpret them, and that would at once stamp it all as a human invention. It must be supposed that God was able to say what he meant: and if he said anything, that he would

say what he meant, and what he meant to be understood as meaning ; and further, that he would say what he intended in so plain a manner that men of ordinary capacity might understand it, without being obliged to pay interpreters. This is the grand secret of all the systems of religion. They are designed and organized to require and hence to support a hired priesthood ; that is the only use there is for them, and therefore it is plain that they are not of Divine origin. The stories in Genesis undoubtedly give the exact idea and belief the writer had about what he relates and describes ; the absurdity and untruthfulness of the stories are owing entirely to his want of knowledge.

But without regard to reason or common sense, frenzied and infatuated superstition adopted and maintained a belief in the God of Moses, the Immaculate Conception, the Resurrection, the Immortality of the Soul, the old personal friend and boon companion of God now turned into a raging Devil, and a terrible Hell, with its lake of fire and brimstone ; and this became the established doctrine of all Christendom. We will presently see how it worked under a perfect and powerful organization.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## THE CHURCH IN OPERATION.

THERE was still one important matter that remained to be settled, and that related to the personality of Jesus,—whether he was in fact God or man. Human reason, learning, ingenuity and superstition exerted all their powers on the subject, and thousands of prayers were addressed to God and his reputed Son, imploring them to settle it. But God gave no response, and Jesus also remained perfectly silent. So, at length, in the year 325, as a last resort, a council of bishops was called at Nicea, and the question was there submitted for them to determine.

There was a great deal of very acrimonious debate upon the subject, but on the question being put to vote, a majority by their votes declared and decided that this Jesus was “the Son of God, be-“gotten of the Father, of the same substance of “the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very “God of very God, begotten not made, being of “one substance with the Father, by whom all “things were made,” etc. Thus the good Jesus, in a little less than three hundred years after his crucifixion, was by a decree of bishops apothoe-

sized and made into God ; but he has never thanked them for the honor they conferred upon him, or given notice that he accepted the position.

However, the election was not unanimous, for Arius and many other learned and good men warmly protested against it, but to no purpose. The vote of that majority in that council settled the question, of course, beyond doubt, that Jesus is God, and its decision has ever since been the distinguishing doctrine of all orthodox churches ; and a full and hearty belief of it is declared by them to be necessary for salvation, and to doubt it is damnable heresy. If anything more absurd and ridiculous was ever done in an assembly of learned men, it remains yet to be discovered.

With this the great Catholic Church became established, and Rome became the seat of its empire ; and then, as the legitimate and necessary consequence of its doctrines and teachings, a cloud, more appalling than the fabled Egyptian darkness, began to settle, and spread its gloomy pall over the whole civilized world. There was a great rush into the priesthood, where easy professional services would secure a good livelihood. The celibacy of the clergy was decreed. Priests were not allowed to marry. But this, so far from securing purity of life, only opened the whole field to lust and profligacy, and no pot dared to call a kettle black. Convents, monasteries and nunner-

ies multiplied. Jesuitical and numerous other societies were formed, and all the members, together with priests, monks, friars, and nuns, were spread thick over all Christendom ; all zealously engaged in preaching and promoting the doctrines and superstitions of the holy Catholic Church. It was a matter of business and personal interest with them — the means by which they gained a livelihood. The number so engaged was enormous. They correspond with the large body of priests and levites which Moses cunningly organized, so as to make their duty to support his system exactly coincide with their personal interest to support themselves. It was a great stroke of policy with Moses, and is the whole secret of the power that supported that system and insured success. It was the same with the Catholic Church. It is that personal interest of the priesthood, *including* monks, friars, nuns, Jesuits, etc., as a kind of levitical adjunct, to support themselves, which has and still does sustain the Church, and give it all its power.

Soon the great truth (than which there is none more certain) that “ignorance is the mother of devotion,” was fully realized. I do not say that it was directly taught. It was unnecessary, for it was obvious then, as it is now, to everybody ; but it was recognized. Learning is too inquisitive ; left to itself it inquires after courses and reasons. It

was necessary for religious purposes that it should be bridled and curbed. Therefore, education was not encouraged by the church, nor was it allowed, except when thoroughly spiced, seasoned and flavored with the mummeries and superstitions of the priests. The minds and consciences of men were fettered and enslaved. Science was forbidden to publish her discoveries, knowledge was suppressed and gross ignorance prevailed. Unbelievers were persecuted and robbed,—heretics were tortured and burned,—every art was employed to bring revenue to the church. To this end all priests and their levitical assistants, monks, friars, nuns, Jesuits, etc., exerted themselves to foster and promote superstition among the people. Rosaries were introduced to assist them to count, and be reminded of the saints. They gathered and paraded manufactured relics of old saints to increase reverence ; pretended to work miracles, and by these means induced the people to contribute. The poor pinched themselves of the necessaries of life to contribute their mites. The rich made large donations to secure their salvation. Many contributed bountifully while living, and many dying bequeathed, some large legacies, and others all their estates to the church. Purgatory was invented, and masses for praying departed souls through it was a fruitful source of income, for they all had to be paid for in advance. Pardons

for crimes that had been committed, and for all moral faults, were sold at established prices ; and dispensations, or full pardons, for contemplated crimes, which had not been but were intended to be committed, were bargained for and sold for money.

In this way, the church became rich and powerful. The nightmare of superstition spellbound all sorts and conditions of men. Kings, queens, princes and nobles, as well as all other classes, fell under the same influence. All contributed to the church ; all bowed, with humble reverence to the Pope of Rome, and submitted abjectly to his domination. No one dared to do anything that he would not sanction ; excommunication was feared and dreaded, as what they then believed to be the final doom of the damned. It would surely call down upon them the dire vengeance of heaven. And this hellish gloom of darkness spread over and rested upon all Europe, and parts of Asia and Africa, for more than a thousand years. If the good Jesus could have looked in upon this scene, how aptly might he have said : “ My house is called the house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.”

At length Martin Luther broke this spell, and shook and astonished the religious world. This bold reformer dared to think and reason, to express and publish his thoughts. That opened

the eyes of other men, and they began to think and reason and talk, and at once their shackles fell. This broke the power of Rome, shattered that great Rock, as with a blast of dynamite, into fragments, and shook it to its center, and it began to disintegrate. The chief good of the reformation was to unfetter mind and free it from the thralldom of religious superstition. It forever broke the power of religion over mind. Once free, it was sure to remain so. Reason left to itself will find truth, and truth unshackled will work her way to drive out error. The immediate effect was to provoke bloody persecutions, for it could not be supposed that the vast multitudes that were being fed and supported by the church would give up without a struggle. All the fragments of the great rock took with them the same God and his reputed Son, and formed into different sects. Each sect claimed to be the true original rock, and all there was of it; and if it had had the power, it would have done just about the same as Rome had done. It would have considered that it was doing God service to destroy and cut off all opponents, as thoroughly as the Israelites did in Canaan.

That is the nature of a false religion. Each assumed to be God's chosen people, and employed to establish his kingdom on earth. They were all unanimously bitterly opposed to Rome, and

could be relied upon to fight her under any circumstances. But, fortunately, they were so jealous of each other, it was impossible to combine themselves into a single force. This fact secured the general safety of mankind, as it does now. For however fairly and smoothly they may talk about the blessings of religious liberty, it would be found on close scrutiny that each sect thinks it is a good thing to have liberty to preach its own doctrines, but is doubtful about the policy of allowing some other sects to do the same. It is obvious if either could get the power to prevent it, no other would have the license. This is the natural tendency of bigotry, which is the child of superstition. The same old leaven and the same old bigotry are clearly developed before us, *right now*, near the close of this nineteenth century, in the trial of Dr. Briggs for *heresy*—for daring to doubt the literal accuracy, the absolute inerrancy and infallibility of portions of the old testament. This proves that the religious sects are all on a wrong basis. They preach charity but have none. They are all founded on the false pretences of Moses—on faith in Moses instead of faith in God. They are following false ideas of God, that he is like man, and advocating false systems. If it were not so, they would harmonize with freedom of thought and freedom of action—with rational diversions and amusements which

are necessary to a healthy development of both the physical and mental natures, and with all the best interests of mankind. But they do not; they are discordant with the nature of man, which proves that they are not true. They are selfish and bigoted, divided into different sects, differing about what each claims to be essential. A house so divided against itself cannot stand. So the work of disintegration, which began over three hundred years ago, is slowly but surely going on, and must continue until all the old doctrines are entirely done away with. The manhood of God, the fabulous stories about a war in heaven, a hell, a great personal devil, the scheme of salvation, the divine paternity of Jesus, and the story of his resurrection, must all pass away as phantoms of a superstitious imagination.

The old doctrines are still persistently maintained in the pulpits, but not in the pews. They are all honeycombed at the foundation, for the people do not believe. They go to church as a matter of habit, or to see the fashions. They become members, and contribute to its support. Every Sunday, thousands on their bended knees solemnly declare, "I believe in the resurrection of the body." It is in the form, and they repeat it after the minister,— it is in fact the doctrine of the church — but does anybody believe it? And worse yet, in some churches even now the priests

every Sunday claim and pretend that for and on behalf of their people they eat a piece of the *very body* of Jesus Christ, manufactured on the spot, and drink some of his *real, true blood*, which, by some kind of magic, they make out of pure wine without changing the vinous flavor. Some may doubt this assertion, and I do not wonder at it, for it seems too incredible to be believed by human beings, but nevertheless it is strictly true. “ ‘T is true, ’t is pity, and pity ’t is, ’t is true,” for it shows to what a depth of nonsense superstition may degrade the human intellect. But all these things are passing away—“Mene, Mene, Tekel, Upharsin,” is written all over them.

The churches may flatter themselves that they are growing in strength and power—but they are not. Their doctrines, theories and organizations are but a mere shell, and very thin; nothing but a bubble, inflated with superstition; for the people do not believe. They are looked upon as absurd; the stories in the Bible, for the most part, are regarded only as mythological fables. So the work of disintegration is quietly but surely going on among all thinking people, and preparing for a final exit of all the old superstitions and mythological doctrines.

But, notwithstanding all I have said, I am bound to remark here that it is not to be assumed or thought that all who have believed in and

earnestly supported the Mosaic and Christian systems were bad men, hypocrites, and evil disposed persons, doing what they knew to be wrong, for they were not by any means ; they were simply deluded and deceived. There have been thousands upon thousands of truly great, good and true men, who have heartily believed and zealously supported both. As the field was much larger, many more are found among Christians than among Hebrews. To attempt to number them would be like attempting to count the stars. I will allude to only one as a sample of many, and that one is the noble old hero known as St. Paul. He, too, was a Jew, a learned man, and after the "most straightest sect of his religion, he lived a Pharisee" — a believer in a resurrection. He was a sincere and earnest believer of Moses and the Prophets. He was living at the time of the crucifixion of Jesus, and with others of his countrymen believed that Jesus taught doctrines that were subversive of their system. When he heard the claim to Immaculate Conception and the Resurrection, he looked upon it as blasphemous, and thought that such teaching ought to be suppressed ; and armed with authority from the chief priests he undertook to do it. He was the same good, earnest man then that he afterward was, for he verily believed that he was doing right. But on looking more carefully into

the writings of Moses and the *Prophets*, and particularly inquiring more about the life and teachings of Jesus, he became convinced that he was wrong, and that Jesus must be the very person spoken of by the prophets, who should come to redeem Israel. He at once became a firm, zealous and sincere believer, and devoted his life with energy to support and maintain that doctrine ; and to his preaching and personal labors, more than all others, Christianity is indebted for its start in the world. And if it could have been kept under the influence and control of just such men, it would, no doubt, have done much good, notwithstanding it was based upon a false and imaginary foundation. For almost any system, under the exclusive guidance and control of real good men, will work well for mankind. Hence, it is conceded that an absolute monarchy, if it could always be sure of having a real good man at the head, is the best of all governments.

It may be conceded that St. Paul was somewhat superstitious. Superstition may be a defect, but it is not a crime ; and it cannot be treasured up as a fault against any one, for all men are more or less superstitious.

But some superstitions have naturally and necessarily a bad tendency and a bad influence upon mankind, and our effort and object should be to hunt out all such, apply the torch of reason to

them, and burn them out. So, while we may admit that St. Paul was superstitious, believed in and supported a system wholly founded on superstition, and taught some things, such as the doctrines of election, preterition, etc., which are horrible to think of, and cannot be true, we can well afford to overlook all such things, and blow them to the winds as husks and chaff. But, while we do this, let us take care not to blow away and lose any of the good wheat.

It is said of St. Paul, that he was rather inferior in personal appearance,—was short, bow-legged, bald-headed, blear-eyed, etc.,—but in that dome of thought there resided a lofty mind, a grand and noble soul. The character of one who offers his life for a cause does not depend upon the question whether the cause is abstractly right or wrong,—whether it is founded upon fact or fiction. If he believes it is right, although his death does not prove it to be so, still he gives his life for what he believes to be right, and that ennobles the sacrifice. Paul believed that his cause was right, and with what a sublime resignation he submitted to the cruel decree of the infamous Nero! As he writes to Timothy: “I am now “ready to be offered, and the time of my departure “is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have “finished my course, I have kept the faith.” A noble ending of a noble life. He kept a faith

that was dear to him and for which he gave his life, and he had a high hope of an everlasting life of happiness; but still there was something which he regarded as of much more importance than even this faith and this hope, and illustrated it in his life; and in proof of this I will quote his own words.

“ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of *angels* and have not charity, I am become as a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not *charity*, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing. Charity suffereth long and is kind. Charity *envieth* not, *vaunteth* not itself, is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth. And now abide Faith, Hope and Charity, these three, but the *greatest of these is Charity.*”

There is the ring of the true metal. Even with him charity was of more consequence than faith and hope. And it is not limited and confined to giving old clothes and cold pieces to the poor, but consists of a high, noble, ardent desire,

coupled with energetic, self-denying, persistent *action*, to promote the general good, well being, comfort and happiness of all mankind.

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## CHAPTER IX.

### MOSES AND HIS TRADITIONS.

WE now come to inquire more particularly about the God of Moses and the creation. What did Moses believe in regard to creation? What kind of a being did he believe and represent God to be? How were those opinions formed? Is it possible that Moses represented the True God? What were his pretences in regard to God, and were those pretences honest and true? And with what right is such a being as Moses represented God to be now set up and claimed to be the True God?

There is no evidence that any God had any personal meeting and talked with Moses, or ordered, directed and promised to assist him to do anything, except the word of Moses himself, if we have even so much as that. Nobody else ever

saw any meeting or heard any conversation between them. He had it all in his own exclusive power to say what he pleased about God, without the possibility of any contradiction, for all his pretended interviews were private, with himself alone. Under such circumstances, and considering his stories are so inconsistent with human experience, to form a correct and proper estimate of the weight and value of his testimony, we must consider the age in which he lived, the opinion and belief he had of creation and of God, all the circumstances that surrounded him, and whether he had any motive to misrepresent. And, above all, we must inquire whether the things he pretended that God ordered and directed him to do, and promised to aid and assist him to do, were consistent with the character of the True God. If they were not, we may be sure that his pretences were false, without reference to motive. For God must be true to himself, though it make every man a *liar*.

Moses was born and lived on the boundary line between oral tradition, handed down from generation to generation, and written history, and was among the first to enter the historic age. All beyond him was verbal tradition, and childish ignorance everywhere prevailed. He entered the historic age with all the ideas, notions, opinions and conceits which then generally prevailed in the

world, and which were represented by traditions. They were probably first formed and shaped into stories in a still more remote, ignorant and childish age, but were doubtless revised and changed, or altered from time to time, as new light dawned upon them. Moses doubtless remodeled them somewhat to suit his own ideas and designs.

At the early dawn of reason, mankind groping in darkness sought to discover the cause and origin of what they saw around them. They had not the slightest suspicion that there was anything of creation but the earth, the sun, moon and the firmament, with the little supposed insignificant bright spots they saw in it at night. They readily conceived that everything must have had a beginning, and hence that all those things, including man and beast, must have been created, and consequently must have had a creator. From this they came to the conclusion that there must be some great unseen power or being that had done all this work.

After concluding that there was a creator, they could not rest contentedly until they imagined out how he did this work ; and also what kind of a being he was ; what were his form and nature and general characteristics, and where he lived. Different people in different localities were doing the same thing, and each formed its own peculiar ideas and notions. On these subjects they exer-

cised their ignorant fancy and imagination, and formulated stories which were handed down verbally from generation to generation, and resulted in the creation of multitudes of imaginary or heathen gods. Then the whole world was pagan, worshiping such gods as they had created by their own imaginations.

When Jacob, after serving his uncle Laban in Haran twenty years, clandestinely stole away to return to Caanan, his wife Rachel stole her father's gods and took them with her. Laban was sorely aggrieved at this,—made a great ado about it, — and hastily pursued, to recover those sacred images. This proves that Laban's family, and consequently his ancestors and family connections, were pagans. Abraham was very anxious that his son Isaac should take a wife from the same family, and he took Rebeckah, the sister of Laban; and Jacob, following after, married the two daughters of Laban. As there were never any family jars on account of religion, the necessary inference is that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all family connections were pagans,— worshippers of imaginary gods, and had and used images to represent them. Hence, their god was of the same genus or class as the gods of the Canaanites and other pagan people,— all imaginary beings, and all served and worshipped in the same way.

While they lived in Canaan, they did not rise to the dignity of being a distinct people, but only one family. Rachel died soon after reaching Canaan, but that left to Jacob her maid-servant, her sister Leah and her maid servant, all of whom Jacob treated as wives, and by all of whom he had children. Then he had twelve sons, many of them probably married to Canaanite women, who had children and maid-servants, and all these, together with other servants, male and female, made up the family of seventy that migrated to Egypt. They all went there as pagans, and to a pagan country.

Arriving in Egypt, the land of Goshen was allotted to them as a possession and a dwelling place. And there they lived for upwards of four hundred years. During this time they doubtless intermarried with and became more or less intermixed with the Egyptians, but preserved their race distinction, and multiplied and grew into a distinct people, which in the time of Moses numbered somewhere about two millions. They evidently retained their pagan ideas, and adopted the paganism of the Egyptians, and their mode of worship. Moses, under the auspices of the royal family, was brought up and educated as a pagan priest, and it is evident that his people were strongly attached to the Egyptian paganism. For, after they had gone into the wilderness, while

Moses was up in Mount Sinai, manufacturing evidence to prove his personal intimacy with his God, the people clamored urgently for a God, and Aaron, to pacify them, made them a golden calf, which was an imitation of Apis, the chief God of the Egyptians, and with this they were appeased. Moses was greatly displeased at it, as it showed that the affections of the people had not been entirely weaned from the Egyptian gods, and wholly fixed upon him and the god he had created for them.

While Moses, during the forty years he spent in the wilderness, was forming and perfecting his scheme to take his people from Egypt to Canaan, and there build up an independent nation with them, he conceived the idea that it would be proper and advisable for them to have a distinct and separate God, a national God of their own, as other peoples had. And consequently he invented and created one for that purpose, and shaped all the stories and traditions which he relates to suit his ideas of such a God. He created this God in a human form, with face, hands, feet and "back parts," which he afterwards says he saw; ascribed to him almighty power and a considerable wisdom, though not of the highest order; but especially endowed him with many human frailties, such as partiality, jealousy, vanity, deceit, cruelty, revenge, etc.; located his private resi-

dence up in the sky, where he was attended with a retinue of angels. His presence was limited to the locality of this personality, so that to be present at different places on the earth it would be necessary for him to "come down," and do more or less traveling ; and that at times he did "come down," and advise, consult and talk with human beings. Such is the kind of God which Moses represented to his people to be the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and required them to adopt and worship as their God. It must be noted, however, that he recognized the existence of other gods, as conclusively appears in the first commandment, which says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me"; that is, no other gods that you will prefer to or like better than me.

All such ideas and representations of God are clearly pagan, and they could not possibly have had any other than a pagan origin. The fact that Moses represents him as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the God of the Israelites exclusively, and not the God generally of all mankind, but so particularly and exclusively the God of the Israelites as to be "an enemy of their enemies and an adversary of their adversaries," and promising to "cut off and destroy all other people" for their benefit, proves most conclusively that he was not the True God, but only an imaginary pagan God, that Moses created for his people and his own use.

These views will be fully sustained by a critical examination of the record of the stories which Moses related, as showing what he believed, his own actions, and all he said about his God. Some of these stories consist of traditions similar to those that had prevailed and been believed in different parts of the world before his day. But as they appear in Genesis, they were probably modified and changed considerably by him to suit his own ideas and his designs. None of them, however, show that he was inspired with any scientific knowledge superior to what other pagans possessed, nor do they show any more exalted ideas or conceptions of God than other pagans had of their gods. Each one, of course, claimed that his God was the great original Creator, and superior to all other gods, except, other heathen did not ascribe to their gods, as Moses did to his, any such low attributes as jealousy and partiality, or charge them with the abominable cruelty of "cutting off and destroying" a whole nation of worthy people to give place to another people.

The first of these traditions which Moses gives relates to the creation, which he says, was all done in six days. It is evident from the Fourth Commandment that he meant six ordinary, natural days. But it is of no consequence at present, whether in the tradition he really means days or periods. But it is to be remarked that he claims

that it was all done only about twenty-five hundred years before his time, which is evidently antagonistic to the discoveries of science.

The order in which the work proceeded on the fifth and sixth days is what any ordinary mind might conceive after the globe was formed and sufficiently cooled, and therefore is of no importance. But the story relates that God created light on the *first day*, and nothing else. This was before he made any bodies that emit light. Perhaps we may not doubt that infinite power might have done so, but it seems to be rather an awkward mode of procedure and very improbable.

The second day's work is the most remarkable of all, for he says on the second day God created a firmament in the *midst* of the waters, to divide the waters that were under the firmament from the waters that were above the firmament. That is undoubtedly just what he meant and supposed to be the fact. This would necessarily imply that he supposed that the firmament was of some solid substance, and that it held back a body of water, and kept it from falling on to the earth. And he supposed that there were windows in this firmament that might be opened as occasion might require, and in the time of the great flood, as "all the foundations of the great deep" did not furnish sufficient water to "cover all the high hills that were under the whole heaven," the windows

of this firmament were opened, and the storage reservoir that was above the firmament was availed of to accomplish the work of destruction. The story about a firmament certainly is not true. Nothing of the kind, or that can be construed by allegory or figure of any kind to answer the place of it, ever existed except in the imagination of men that were ignorant of the true fact. Moses undoubtedly believed it, or he would not have put it so into his account of creation. It appeared so to him and his ancestors. They had nothing to judge by but appearances, and so they believed. And if he could believe such a thing, what might he not believe?

On the third day, it says, the waters were gathered into seas, and dry land made to appear ; and on the same day, "the earth brought forth grass" and vegetation generally. The *improbable* thing to be remarked about this day's work is, that it represents vegetation as flourishing before the sun was created. We may admit this as within the *power* of God, but, as a fact, very improbable.

On the fourth day, as the story goes, God created the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night, etc., and "he made the stars also, and *set them in the firmament of heaven*, to give light upon the earth." That is all the stars were made for, according to Moses ; quite insignificant things, mere shining specks, set in the firmament

as a jeweler would set diamonds in a brooch, and to give light to the earth.

Such, Moses supposed and believed, was the whole extent of creation, aside from man and beast ; and, as afterwards appears, that the earth was firmly and permanently fixed and established in one locality, that it was the only place of any importance in the universe, and that all other bodies, great and small, were created simply for the purpose of furnishing it with light. This, then, was the idea Moses had of creation,—that the earth was the only important body in the universe, that it was fixed immovably in a certain locality, and of some considerable size, but how large he had no idea. That over it, and some distance from it, there was a solid firmament, made to prevent the waters that were above it from flooding the earth ; that it had windows in it that might be opened, had been opened at the time of the flood ; and that it was spangled with some insignificant, light-giving objects, and that the sun and moon revolved around between the earth and firmament in whatever way they might. From such a situation Moses contemplated, imagined, and formed his ideas of a God.

Other traditions which Moses relates most clearly show what ideas he formed of the personality of his God, and what he thought of him. The one that comes next in order relates to the

creation of man. It declares that God made man *in his own image and likeness* out of the dust of the earth, and "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul." Soon after "he thought it was not good for man to be alone," so he caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, who was named Adam, and while asleep "he took out one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof," and of the rib "he made a woman, and brought her unto the man." This story must have originated in a very childish and whimsical age, and also at a time when arrogance and presumption had free license to say what they pleased. The modern mode of accounting for the origin of man is much more plausible, and undoubtedly approximates much nearer to the fact. However, it establishes the fact that Moses conceived the idea that man was in the "image and likeness" of God, and it followed as a necessary consequence, and so he created his God in the image and likeness of man, possessed of infinite power, and, perhaps, more wisdom, but otherwise just like a man. Just such a being as he said he saw from the cleft in the rock, with face, hands, feet, and "back parts."

This view is sustained by the other parts of the story relating to Adam and Eve, and also by the other traditions. The story goes on to relate

that God planted a garden in the East, gives the exact boundaries, and caused to grow in it "every tree that was pleasant to the sight and good for food"; and also planted in the midst of the garden another peculiar tree, which he called "the tree of knowledge of good and evil," and placed Adam and Eve in the garden "to dress it and keep it." He commanded them, saying, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayst freely eat, but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for, in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." After thus talking with and giving them his commandment, he left them to enjoy themselves and went home.

The Buddhists have a very similar tradition about the origin of man, but in place of the Garden of Eden which Moses speaks of, they say that the first pair was placed on the Island of Ceylon. This shows the wide prevalence of a tradition which Moses shaped to suit his own purpose, and that was to enable him to trace the ancestry of his people to his first man, which is all simply imaginary.

Moses gives no account of the creation, or any origin of a devil or a hell, and no such things were recognized in his system. His system had respect only to this life, and a future existence was not thought of. According to his story it seems to have pleased God to take Enoch home

with him, and it is afterwards related that he sent a fiery chariot to fetch Elijah up there also. But it is nowhere hinted that there was, or ever would be, any general migration from earth to *heaven or hell, or any other place*, either *before or after death*. The Hebrews, after the days of Moses, learned that the Gentiles recognized the existence of certain bad beings,—such as Satan, Moloch, Belial, Mammon, and Beelzebub,—but they had no place in their theocracy. The only villain the authors of the Mosaic traditions introduced in the great drama was the serpent, which is represented to be the most cunning of all beasts. And it is represented that this serpent appeared in the garden, and entered into conversation with Eve about this tree of knowledge. She told him what God had said and commanded concerning it. And he then as much as said that God had not told them the truth ; for, he said, God well knew that it would not kill them to eat of it ; nor would they die in consequence of eating of it ; but, on the contrary, it would “open their eyes, and they would be as gods, knowing good and evil.” The event proved that the serpent was the most truthful. For after God discovered that they had eaten of the fruit, instead of killing them, as he said he would, *on the very day*, he only drove them out of the garden, and required them to go to work for a living, but allowed them

to live to a good old age, and raise a large family of children.

After eating of the fruit, God is represented as coming there. "*He was heard walking in the garden in the cool of the day,*" just like a gentleman enjoying the evening zephyrs at his country seat. He calls aloud for Adam, and Adam appears with Eve by his side, and he talks to them face to face, as a man would talk with his neighbors. He draws from them the confession that they had eaten of that tree. After listening to their excuses, and learning the circumstances of the case, he pronounces the several punishments for each offender. He punished Adam by cursing the earth, so that it would bring forth thorns and thistles and make it hard to cultivate, and doomed him as follows: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground." Nothing is threatened or said relating to his posterity.

Some fifteen or sixteen hundred years after those garden scenes are represented to have occurred, there happened, according to Moses, a great flood on a part of the earth occupied by the Semitic race. The fact that there was a flood does not prove that God had any such connection with it as stated in the tradition. It was not by any means as extensive as the Bible account states, but to those on the spot it undoubt-

edly seemed to cover the whole earth. They had no correct idea of the extent of the earth, but supposed it had but one side, that on which they lived. They could not conceive it possible that human beings could live on, stand up, and walk about on the underside, like flies on a ceiling. Hence, they supposed that that flood covered the whole earth ; and long after its occurrence they set to work to account for it, and finally elaborated a tradition from which Moses manufactures the one he gives in Genesis.

His version represents that God became utterly disgusted with the whole race of mankind, which had become quite numerous, and determined to destroy it, as appears from the following quotation: “ And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, *and it grieved him at his heart.*” Then he had a personal interview with Noah, told him of his intention to destroy mankind, and ordered him to build an ark of gopher-wood, with rooms in it, and to pitch it within and without with pitch : gave him a plan with full and minute specifications. It was to be made with rooms so as to accommodate Noah and wife and their three sons with their wives ; also pairs of all living animals, and storage-room

for a good supply of provisions, for both man and beasts. "And Noah did according to all that God commanded him." When the Ark was completed and stored with provisions, Noah and wife, his three sons and their wives, went aboard, took on pairs of all animals, and the craft was ready for the great cataclysm. Then, "in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, [very particular as to the exact date] the same day were the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the *windows of heaven were opened*. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights." "All the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered, and all flesh and every man died," —except, of course, what were in the Ark. This ought to have been considered the full expiation of Adam's transgression.

After the storm was over, Moses says God "came down" again, and Noah entertained him. He built an altar unto him, and took of clean beast and fowl, and offered burnt offerings to him. This fact is of no consequence, but the statement which follows is of great importance, as showing the ideas which Moses had of God. It is as follows: "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour." The Lord is represented to have experienced just the same kind of sensation that many a gentleman has experienced where good

meat was being roasted. “ And the Lord smelled a sweet savour.” Just think of it. How pleased and satisfied he must have been !

Then it is represented God made a covenant with Noah and sealed it with a rainbow, by which he promised never to destroy the world again. Gave it to Noah and his posterity, commanded him to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and again went home.

It would seem that Noah did all that could have been reasonably expected of him in the matter of increasing and replenishing the earth with a new population, for in less than two hundred years the world was again pretty well filled with people. And this imagined God must have been considerably disappointed to find that the new race was no better than the one he had so mercilessly destroyed. As the story goes, he heard that the impious people of Shinar were building a tower, and designed that its top should reach up to heaven, and by that means they intended to invade and take possession of his private residence, as the giants did when they piled Pelion upon Ossa to get into Jupiter’s heaven, and frightened the old fellow out of his wits. “ So he came down to see it.” After viewing the plan and witnessing the progress of the work for a while, he went back to consider. He came to the conclusion that the plan was

*feasible*, and that they would accomplish their object unless he adopted some vigorous means to prevent it. So he reasoned, and said to his friends, “Behold the people is one, (*i. e.* united,) and they have all one language; and this they begin to do, and now nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do. Go to, (*i. e.* come on,) let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” It is said that he did so, and consequently the work had to be abandoned.

In all these stories in regard to the creation of the world or the creation of man, or of any of the work performed or the way in which it was done, or about the personality of God, his residence or his movements, there is not the trace of anything but Pagan ideas, notions and imaginings. But they show just the ideas and notions Moses had of those things. As Moses gives them and relates them (as modified by himself) as facts and as true stories, we must come to the conclusion that he believed them just as they read, and that they fairly represent and portray his views and belief.

Absurd and ridiculous as all such ideas may seem to us now, a little reflection will show how easy and natural it was for people in the days of Moses to believe them; and he did not live in

the nineteenth century of the Christian era either, but some thirty-four centuries before, and when mankind were very ignorant, and trusted to their imaginations for facts. When we were children all these stories were read and taught to us. Our ancestors believed them as they read, and we followed in the wake, and believed them all to be literally true, as many Christians now do. People did the same in the time of Moses. There was no talk of these stories being allegories in my young days, but real facts. When it becomes necessary to call them allegories, it is high time to throw them away and pronounce them fictions.

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## CHAPTER X.

### THE ORIGIN OF THE GOD OF MOSES.

As it is important to have and keep in view a correct and definite understanding of the real situation and belief of Moses, and the kind of God he imagined and formed as a National God for his people, I will here condense and summarize them as follows :

Moses believed that this planet was the only

body in creation that was of any consequence, and that everything else was made for its benefit ; that it was firmly and permanently fixed in one locality ; that the firmament or sky overhead was created as it appeared of some solid substance, and made and fixed to prevent a body of water that he supposed to be above it from falling upon and submerging the earth. That there were windows in it which might be opened as occasion might require, and that at the time of the flood they were opened, and some of that water let out to aid in the work of destruction. That the sun and moon were created to regulate the seasons and give light to the earth ; and that the stars were also created to give light to the earth ; that they were very insignificant shining bodies, firmly set in the firmament. That God formed man out of the dust of the earth in the same way that an artist would form a model for a piece of statuary, and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life, and so he became a living soul. That, thinking it not good for man to be alone, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and took a rib out of his side, "and closed up the flesh instead thereof," and of this rib "made a woman, and brought her to the man."

This is just what we might suppose an ignorant and childish people, who were intent upon accounting for everything they saw, might imagine.

They had nothing but their imagination to rely upon for facts, outside of what they actually saw. It seemed probable enough, and Moses probably believed it about as he relates it ; just as we did when we were children, and just as many Christians do now. No such place as hell was ever thought of in those days ; but Moses believed that there was a certain permanent locality up in the sky, between the earth and the firmament and not far off, called heaven, where God had established his throne and his private residence. Hence, when he had anything to do on earth, that it would be necessary for him to "come down." Every heathan nation located its God up in about the same locality and in the same way.

Moses claimed that his God was in the image and likeness of man, possessed almighty power and considerable wisdom ; but otherwise was like man, and had his general characteristics, including partiality, jealousy, vanity, liability to get angry and fly in a passion, etc.; that he occasionally left this heavenly mansion and "came down" to earth on official business, or to make friendly visits. He "came down" to make Adam, and to make a wife for him, and to settle them in the garden of Eden which he planted for them. That after Adam's transgression he came down again, was heard to be "walking in the garden in the

cool of the day," and then discovered the great sin Adam and Eve had committed ; called them to account for it, and had several personal interviews with them on the subject ; spoke a human language, and talked with them face to face, as a man would talk with his acquaintances. Afterwards he "came down" to visit Noah, told him he intended to destroy mankind from the face of the earth, ordered him to build an ark of gopher-wood, and gave him a plan with full and minute specifications. After the flood he "came down" again, and enjoyed the smell of "the sweet savor" of the meat Noah roasted for his entertainment, and made a covenant with Noah, by which he gave to Noah and his seed full control of the earth and all there was in it, and agreed never again to destroy the world. That still later his God "came down" to see what the people of Shinar intended to do with the tower they were building, and frustrated their designs by confounding their language.

It will not do for learned divines to hatch out and invent theories and suppositions that Moses said anything about the creation, which he did not suppose and believe to be the real facts ; that he said one thing when he meant another ; that his "six days" meant six long periods ; that he did not mean what he said about the firmament and the waters above it ; that he did not mean

that Adam and Eve were made exactly as he describes ; that he did not mean that God actually planted the Garden of Eden, and the tempting tree, called the tree of knowledge, in the midst of it ; that he did not mean to be understood that God had a human form and the general characteristics of man ; that he sometimes left heaven and "came down" to earth, and had personal interviews with mankind, spoke a human language, talked with Adam and Eve and Noah, face to face, as one man would talk to another ; that it is all mystic language that requires interpretation ; that it was not intended to be understood by the common people until they paid priests to interpret it. It will not do to talk so in these days. It is obvious that Moses understood the meaning of the words he used, and if he at any time said one thing when he meant another,—used language to conceal his thought, or said what he did not mean,—that of itself would be sufficient to impeach his testimony altogether ; for it would be impossible for priests or anybody else to determine what he meant by what he said. If he did not mean just what he said, then why did he say anything ?

And if it should be said that he was inspired by God to write as he did, and that it was the intention of God to have him hide the real truth in mystic language and allegorical stories, which

could not be understood without a skilled interpreter, that would make it still worse,— it would accuse God of intent to deceive. Such an assumption as relates to the true God would be blasphemy. It is equivalent to charging him with deception, of which it is impossible that he should ever be guilty; or, what is quite as bad, of hiding his meaning in mystic language, so as to make it necessary to employ, and thus to support, a hired priesthood to interpret it. It is therefore only fair and reasonable to take it for granted that in all he said about the creation of the world, the firmament, and Adam and Eve, ridiculous as it is, Moses related just what he imagined and believed to be the facts. There is no reason to suppose or believe that Moses had any other different ideas or opinions about those things than just exactly what he said. As corrected by him, they were substantially the notions and opinions of the age, and there is no evidence that Moses held any different opinions. His was the case of a man of great intellect, but whose knowledge was necessarily limited to what was then known in the world. He made no new discoveries.

Now we know that his ideas and belief in regard to the creation were wrong, inadequate, infinitely below the facts, and we might naturally suppose that his ideas of God would be equally erroneous. Neither he nor his ancestors had any

reasonable conception of the True God. They relied wholly upon their imaginations to idealize him, and their ideas were formed and founded on the *basis* that this world was all there was of creation. Of course, his presence woud be confined within its limits. They assigned him an elevated position in the sky, to enable him the better to observe what was going on below. That the earth and the people upon it comprised everything that required his care and supervision. They as well as he invested God with a human form, as the highest excellence they could conceive of, and assumed that he must have the attributes and general characteristics of man. They could have no doubt that he might travel about, and visit any place as he pleased within the limits of that imagined creation. They had no idea that he was everywhere present at the same time. He could not possibly be without the ability to talk, and it seemed natural to suppose that he could speak any human language in vogue. From such crude imaginings, in their endeavor to account for everything they saw or heard of, they formulated the stories about the creation of the world, the Garden of Eden, the creation of Adam and Eve, and all about the flood, (all probably modified somewhat by Moses himself,) but all of which are manifestly the creatures of the pagan imagination of an ignorant and childish age, but fully and fairly representing the belief of Moses.

Therefore, we must come to the conclusion that this God of Moses was conceived and born of the imagination of man,—created by the imagination in the same way, and by precisely the same process of reasoning, as Saturn, Jupiter, Neptune, Pluto, Apis, Osiris, and other heathen gods were created, and that he was the same kind of a being, no other or different, and so understood and believed by Moses to be. And this view is confirmed, established and proved most conclusively by the general character and actions that are attributed to him, and the way or manner in which Moses used him.

With such a God at his command, there were great possibilities for a cunning, shrewd politician like Moses. He might easily make an ignorant and superstitious people believe that such a God had "come down," and called to him from a bush that seemed to be on fire, or shown his "back parts" to him on the mountain, or done any other absurd and ridiculous thing.

Three or four thousand years ago, it was believed that when the gods "came down" to visit this world, they generally chose the tops of mountains as their inns or stopping places, on the supposition that they were nearer their home, and more readily accessible. A great poet, who did not pretend to be inspired, says early one *rosy* morning

“That Jove convened the Senate of the skies  
Where high Olympus’ cloudy tops arise.”

And Parnassus is famed as the favorite haunt of Apollo, Bacchus, and the Heavenly Nine. The God of Moses chose Mt. Sinai. His thunders, however, were in no way superior to those of Jupiter, and neither were his revelations. When “Jove convened the Senate of the skies,” it was for the purpose to prevent, and he issued his solemn commandment, that no God should show any partiality towards, or think of yielding any assistance to, either of the armies of men that were at war with each other, but leave them to fight it out among themselves. And, generally speaking, those heathen gods were above the meanness of *partiality and jealousy*, which were among the distinguishing traits of the God of Moses. Certainly, none of them was ever guilty of planning and instigating a scheme to “cut off and destroy” a whole nation of well-behaved people, to give their land and property to another people of any sort; and they never acknowledged any “peculiar people,” to whom they showed all their favors, to the exclusion of all other peoples. The acknowledged heathen gods were quite as good as the God of Moses. They all had some regard for right and justice.

The True God certainly has no such form or general characteristics as are attributed to this

God of Moses. Nor could he possibly be guilty of any such base and detestable actions, or of any of the foul and atrocious crimes that have been perpetrated in the name of the God of Moses. But such was the God that Moses taught his people to believe in. He was just such a being as would answer his purpose, and that was all he cared for. Just such a being as a shrewd, cunning politician might use with an ignorant and superstitious people, to help carry out any scheme he might project, and Moses took full advantage of it. More than two thousand years after Moses, Mahomet used the same God in the same way that Moses did to carry out his schemes. And he performed his deceptions near the same place where Moses performed his. The Christians will fly up and say, "But Mahomet was a deceiver, an impostor." Indeed? How do we know that he was any more of a deceiver than Moses? We have the word of Mahomet for one, and we have only the word of Moses, (if indeed we have as much as that,) for the other. If tested by the number of believers, the believers in Mahomet far outnumber the Christians. As Carlyle says, "For these twelve centuries it (Mahomedanism) has been the religion and life guidance of the fifth part of the whole kindred of mankind. Above all, it has been a religion *heartily believed.*" Joseph Smith used the same God in the same way, and he had his followers."

Previous to their pretended interview with God, the general character of Mahomet as well as Smith was just as good as that of Moses, quite as credible and worthy of belief. From the time that Moses was taken out of the bulrushes to the time he pretended that God called him at the burning bush, which was about eighty years, all we know of him is that he murdered an Egyptian and fled to the wilderness to escape punishment for that crime. Neither Mahomet nor Smith ever personally committed any crime.

Moses obtained employment to tend the flocks of Jethro, married his daughter, and lived with him about forty years before God noticed him. All this time he was simply a fugitive from justice. Under these circumstances, while he was attending to his business, he pretends that this God called to him from a bush that appeared to be on fire but was not consumed, and introduced himself as follows: "I am the God of *thy father*, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. He did not claim to be the great Creator of the universe or the God of all mankind generally, but only the God of those particular persons and their posterity.

It was the custom of that age for every people to have its own separate and peculiar God, and Moses prepared to follow the fashion. After thus introducing himself, Moses pretends that God said

to him, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt.” “And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey, unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.” Now this is what Moses pretends that God said to him at the first interview he ever had with him, when he introduced himself and called him at the burning bush. It was then and there that the great scheme was first unfolded. It was a scheme *to cut off and destroy all those peoples* who inhabited the land of Canaan, to give place to the Israelites who were then in bondage in Egypt. This is implied in what is above quoted, but is made more clear and certain by a subsequent interview, at which Moses represents that God said to him “I will send an angel before thee to keep thee in the way.” “I will be an enemy unto thy enemies, and an adversary unto thine adversaries,” “and bring thee in unto the Amorites, and the Hittites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, *and I will cut them off.*” “I will send my fear before thee, and *will destroy all the people to whom thou shalt come.*” This is the scheme which Moses pretended that his God planned, devised, laid out, and ordered him to

undertake and execute. And to encourage and strengthen him, said to him, "Certainly, I will be with thee." Then, if we believe Moses, this was all God's work, his plan, his scheme, his object, devised, first suggested, and directly ordered by him. This is the great, dominant and overruling pretence of Moses, and by which all his other pretences, which were all only in furtherance of the same object and end, must be judged of and determined. Is it true that the one only living and True God devised, first suggested, and ordered the execution of that scheme, and promised to personally assist in carrying it out? Is it true? Was it God's own personal scheme, or was it only the scheme of Moses? On the answer to this question depends the all important question whether Moses was a true prophet, and representative of the True God, or whether he was an imposter.

An effort to rescue a worthy people from bondage, and place them where their condition might be improved, is certainly in and of itself worthy of all commendation. But to plot and plan and scheme by superior force to cut off, destroy and annihilate another distant and innocent people, who never gave any offense, and who had no hand in the enslavement, in order to give them a country exclusively to themselves, is a very different thing. It is the plan of a human or inhuman conqueror, who tramples heedlessly on the

rights of others in total disregard of justice and all moral principle.

It was no part of this scheme to take the Israelites to Canaan as an army of missionaries to reform the people, to teach them the knowledge of God, persuade them to accept, serve and worship this God. Nothing of the kind. No other people were to be allowed in the circle. They would not intermarry or associate with any other people, or allow them to have any interest in or claim upon this God. He was their own God, the God of Israel and of the Israelites exclusively; was not the God of any other people; “was an enemy of their enemies,” and all other people must be *cut off and destroyed*, so that the Israelites might have the whole country to themselves exclusively. This was the scheme.

There were to be no friendly negotiations to allow the Israelites to settle there peaceably among them, as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had done, and allow them to adopt their own system of worship. No, this would not answer. The only thing to be done was to cut off and destroy all the people to whom they would come—kill them—put them out of the way, and seize and appropriate all their property. The justice and morality of the scheme had no weight with Moses. Moses coveted the land of Canaan, and his tenth commandment was not allowed to interfere with

his plan. The people that lived in that land must all be cut off and destroyed. It was the scheme of a robber and murderer ; and, as it was afterward carried out, was one of the blackest, most inhuman and atrocious crimes ever committed by man.

Who were the people of Canaan, who were to be thus cut off and destroyed to give place to the Israelites ? What kind of people were they ? Three of these peoples, namely, the Canaanites, Perizyites and Hittites, were the immediate neighbors of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob for over two hundred years, while they lived there, and these were probably a fair sample of all the rest of the dwellers in Canaan. Some few little incidents crop out in the record, from which we may judge of their character. Abraham, with Sarah, his half-sister, for a wife, came and settled among them about six hundred years before the time we are now speaking of, and when he came "he was rich in cattle, and in silver and gold." They did not attempt to rob him, or overreach, or take any advantage of him, but allowed him to settle among them, and always treated him with great respect and kindness. Those peoples inherited the land from their ancestors, who had owned and occupied it from time immemorial, and had a good right and perfect title to it.

After Abraham had lived there some forty

years, more or less, his wife Sarah died, and he had no suitable place to bury her. He modestly made his want known to his neighbors, the sons of Heth. The sons of Heth immediately rose up as one man, and said to him, "In the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead. None of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayst bury thy dead." This was a kind and generous offer. Abraham thanked them for their kindness, but desired to have a sepulchre of his own. He knew of a field which had the cave of Machpelah in it, and it was owned by a man named *Ephron*, and he desired that they would treat with Ephron for that field for him. As soon as Ephron heard that Abraham wanted the field for a burial place, he immediately came forward, a noble soul, and said, "My lord, the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee. In the presence of the sons of my people, give I it thee. Bury thy dead." But as Abraham was rich, he did not wish to receive it as a gift. He chose to pay for it, and therefore desired Ephron to set a price upon it. In compliance with that request, the generous-hearted Ephron said, "My lord, hearken to me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury, therefore, thy dead?" He did not try to drive a sharp bargain, did not want to take money for it; but Abraham weighed out

the silver, which Ephron reluctantly received, and passed the title. The same people were *equally* kind and friendly with Isaac and Jacob, and so they lived friendly neighbors for more than two hundred years. From these incidents we may judge of the character of that people. They were a generous, noble-hearted, magnanimous people. And yet these are the people, specially named among others, whom Moses pretended that God ordered to be “cut off and destroyed,” and their land and property seized and appropriated by the descendants of the very man to whom all this kindness and generosity was shown. Is it true? Was this God’s scheme, or the scheme of Moses? A scheme that was never excelled on earth for downright hellish atrocity. Did Moses tell the truth? Was it God’s scheme? Did God originate, devise, and out of the flames of a burning bush order its execution? Or was it the scheme of Moses, wholly devised by him, and by him falsely charged upon God? We have nothing but the word of Moses for it. Is it possible to believe him? Did he tell the truth?

The scheme was successful, and was carried out to the letter. All those innocent, unoffending, noble people were “cut off and destroyed,” all their property taken by the Israelites; and the deceptive glamour of success gilded with the shining garbs of righteousness all the crimes and

atrocities that were committed to accomplish it; and it is claimed that they were noble, honorable, praiseworthy, glorious deeds,—the cause of humanity, the cause of righteousness, the cause of God. And ever since Moses has been lauded as the most worthy of all men, the greatest patriot, the greatest benefactor of the race, a model of excellency, the grand vicegerent and foremost prophet of God, and the prototype of Christ.

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## CHAPTER XI.

### THE MOTIVE OF MOSES.

ASSUMING, for the sake of argument, that Moses in his stories referred to the True God, when we can readily see a *motive* for making a remarkable pretence of private, personal intimacy with God, and receiving special communications and directions from him, we have a right to use that motive and all attendant circumstances to test the credibility of the pretence. If we find the motive strong, and the pretence of something miraculous contrary to human experience, this

of itself is sufficient to justify a strong doubt of its truth. But, above all, if the pretence be inconsistent with and antagonistic to the character of God, we are forced to conclude that it is false, without reference to motive, for God must be true to himself though it prove every man to be a liar.

We have no evidence at all but the bare word of Moses that God appeared and talked to him. While we may admit that it is not impossible for God to make a direct, personal, verbal communication to a human being, nevertheless it would be so inconsistent with human experience, and so miraculous, that the testimony of one man would hardly be sufficient to entitle a single instance of it to belief. If he should do anything of the kind, it surely would be in regard to something of public interest and importance ; and it is incredible that he would do it off in a remote by-place, privately and secretly to one person, and not generally to all, or at least to many.

We discredit the stories of Mahomet and Joseph Smith about communications claimed to have been made in this way, and where we do not find any very unworthy motive, — nothing more than a desire to have others believe as they did. Then why not discredit the story of Moses ? What better right have we to believe Moses than Mahomet and Smith ? From what we know of the men, Moses was personally no better or more en-

titled to credit than either of the others. Neither of them ever personally committed a murder or other crime. And neither of them ever planned or instigated a scheme to cut off and destroy a whole nation of worthy people, or any people, to make room for their followers. On the contrary, they were always ready to receive all that were willing to join them. If God visited and talked with Moses, why may he not have done the same with Mahomet and Smith? They were quite as respectable, and their motives were certainly full as good.

It is particularly incredible that God should take such a special interest in the Israelites, and have more regard for them than he had for the Egyptians, or the Canaanites, or any other people. They certainly were no better, or more worthy. They were pagans, and quite as much so as any of the other people. But if he chose to do so, it is incredible that he should have gone to Moses alone in the wilderness, and, in a clandestine way, ordered and directed him to take steps to ameliorate their condition in such a way as Moses pretended, when there was a much easier, more direct and certain way of accomplishing the object. Here is an instance where Moses did not credit his God with a high order of wisdom and sagacity. The Israelites were then in a rich and delightful country. And if God, in-

stead of going to Moses off in the wilderness, had appeared directly to Pharoah, made him conscious of his personal presence, and requested him to see that they were properly treated, it would, most certainly, have been attended to at once. Besides, Pharoah and all his subjects would have been exceedingly delighted with the opportunity of thus being made personally acquainted with God. This is just what they and everybody else then were, and ever since have been, most intensely desirous of and anxious for. Everything earthly then (or now) would readily have been exchanged for it. There are many fanatics and enthusiasts now, who claim and pretend to have such a personal acquaintance; but God knows they are all liars.

It is obvious that the great, all-absorbing, and controlling motive and main object Moses had in view was not merely to rescue his race from bondage,—that was only an insignificant part of it,—but to conquer, subdue, “cut off and destroy” all the people of Canaan, a large and delightful country, and give it to his people. He had set his heart upon that particular country. He would not be satisfied with obtaining control and governing it and the people that lived there. His scheme was to butcher, murder, cut off and destroy them all by an universal and indiscriminate slaughter, and give his people most exclu-

sive possession of it. This was the scheme Moses devised and set his heart upon. This was his great controlling motive, and everything else was subordinate to it. And he used his absurd and childish ideas of God as among the most efficient means to accomplish that purpose.

To judge of the power and effect of this motive upon the mind of Moses, we must take into consideration the great magnitude of the main object he had in view,—that of acquiring the land of Canaan,—the age in which he lived, all his circumstances and surroundings, his opinion and belief in regard to creation; and more particularly his ideas and belief in regard to God, what kind of a being he supposed him to be,—the gross ignorance of his people, how easy it was to make such a people believe that God had appeared and talked to him; also the prevailing opinions and beliefs of people generally at that time on those subjects. All these things have a direct bearing upon the point.

It was customary in those days for rulers to use pretended directions and communications from their gods with their ignorant subjects, to excite enthusiasm, to promote their personal designs. Moses, undoubtedly, used his God in the same way. A very important piece of evidence to prove that his God was of the kind that might be so used, is the fact that he pretended that he

saw him, and described him as having a human form, with feet, hands, a face too glorious to be looked upon with mortal eyes, but with "back parts" which he was permitted to see. Can anybody really believe this? This obvious falsehood is alone sufficient to prove that Moses was an imposter. Whether it relates to the True God or to an imaginary being, it is equally false. It certainly is false as to the True God, and cannot possibly be true of an imaginary being. This proves that, when Moses told that story, he was lying, lying, lying. He deliberately told his people a falsehood, for the purpose of inducing them to believe that he had personal intimacy with God. And it had that effect, as he knew it would with the ignorant people he was then dealing with; but it should have quite the opposite effect with people nowadays. It is just one of those things which often happens now, where a false witness, in his effort to insure a belief of his false story, unwittingly over acts, makes his story a little too strong, and says or does something which betrays its falsity. There was not much danger of this as between Moses and his ignorant people; but with people of this age, who are not crazed or demented with superstition and ignorance, it must prove that he was deceiving his people; that he told them a deliberate falsehood, and that he was an imposter.

The falsity of his pretences is also betrayed by the fact that he did not dare or attempt to rely and act upon what he pretended God promised to do. He did not dare to attempt to lead his people directly to Canaan just as they were, and rely upon the promise of God to "cut off and destroy all the people to whom he would come." If it had been true as he pretended, that God had so promised, they would have no serious fighting to do themselves, and he might have led them direct the shortest route to Canaan, and had them all settle there in less time than it took to go to Sinai. But Moses was too wise and cunning to attempt such an experiment. This clearly shows that he was using an imaginary God. That all his pretences were false, and made for the effect they would have upon his people, to keep them under his control and keep them quiet, while he attended to the real business. They were a raw, unorganized rabble, and would have stood no chance against the Canaanites. They would have been totally annihilated. Moses well knew that when they were lead to Canaan his God would expect to be on the strongest side, and that it would be folly to take them there until they were fully able to do the business without relying upon special assistance from God. The cunning Moses, like all such men, had ready a plausible excuse. If the mountain would not come to Mahomet, his

God would suddenly change his mind, and order Mahomet to go to the mountain. The excuse Moses had was, that while they were all together, before they would be scattered all over the land of Canaan, he wanted to introduce and teach them his system of worship. So, instead of attempting to lead them directly to Canaan, like Mahomet, he went to the mountain,—Mt. Sinai. There he dallied with them for a long time, introduced his deceptive and ridiculous system of worship, and with it diverted their minds, while he attended most assiduously to the main business, which was to organize, drill and train all able-bodied men into an army of soldiers.

His system of worship, like his pretences, was all a deception and a fraud. It was the same kind of worship that had been used for centuries by other heathen nations towards their imaginary Gods, and it was adopted by Moses for the same purpose that other heathens used it, namely, as a means of supporting a priesthood. Moses well knew that no *real, intelligent* God could be honored or pleased by the killing and roasting of dumb animals. It is ridiculous to suppose that he could be. It is evident that it was adopted and used by him to deceive the common people, the producers, into the belief that it was a sacred duty, required by God, to contribute of their substance for his service. And this answered a

double purpose. First, the contributions supported the army of priests and levites, who thereby became personally interested to support his system and all his pretences; and secondly, it diverted the minds of the people, while Moses himself was attending to the more serious business of forming an army.

The human traits and characteristics which Moses ascribes to his God, such as partiality, jealousy, vanity, deceit, injustice, cruelty, etc., prove that he had no adequate or proper conception of the character of the True God, for it is impossible that the True God can have any such characteristics.

The collateral stories that are told about the plagues, the dividing of the waters of the Red Sea and the Jordan, and causing the sun and moon to stand still for about a whole day to accommodate Joshua, and all the other remarkable stories, so far from tending to corroborate and promote belief in the pretences of Moses, are so absurd and ridiculously false that they have the effect, like his pretence that he saw the person of God, only to cast a Munchausen hue over the whole. If there had been any truth in those stories, some mention, or at least some hint, of them would have appeared in the history or traditions of Egypt and other countries.

Morality, right and justice were not considered

in forming his scheme. They had no weight with Moses. The doctrine that might makes right was adopted by him as it was by other people in that age. In his pretences he took it for granted that his God agreed with him ; held the same views that he did. This fact detects, exposes, proves and establishes the falsity of his pretences beyond a doubt as to the True God. For the true God certainly did not, could not, agree with him.

It is plain to see that the motive and object Moses had in view was sufficient — with such absurd and ridiculous ideas as he had of God,—to induce him to make any pretence that he thought might have a favorable impression on the minds of his people, and help him to carry out his scheme. Other conquerors have cruelly invaded and conquered countries without right, and occasioned much bloodshed and suffering. They did it to acquire control and extend their government over the people. No human wretch but Moses, however, ever planned to kill, cut off and destroy all the inhabitants of the country they proposed to conquer. Moses could not be satisfied with anything short of the entire extermination of all the inhabitants of Canaan. That was the scheme he set his heart upon, and the motive power of all his actions. But it was too horrible to be suggested even to his own people, on his own responsibility alone. They might see that it was un-

just, too cruel. Besides, they might think, How can we do it? We are not strong enough to go and kill all the inhabitants of Canaan. They would kill us. We had better stay where we are. Moses saw this, *and so he determined to charge it upon God*, pretend that *God had appeared to him and ordered it to be done*, and *promised to assist in doing it*. To open even this story to them required great care and consideration.

It would be necessary that they should be first impressed with the belief that God did at times "come down," and visit and talk with mankind, and tell them what to do. So he shaped the old traditions to meet the case, had it instilled into their minds how he "came down," ("came down" was an important idea,) and talked with Adam and with Noah. He fabricated all the traditions about the visits to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I say fabricated, for there is no proof of them except his word. Told them how God promised to give the whole land of Canaan to their seed. This was said to make them believe that they had a divine right to that country. Pretended that God told Abraham that they would be strangers in a strange land for four hundred years, (which was said to correspond with what had happened to them,) but that after that time they would come out "with much substance" and possess the land. And this is the sum and substance of

all the revelations made to those patriarchs,—that their seed should have all Canaan. What an important revelation! These stories show and prove the scheming of a politician.

It was great business for God to “come down” three several times,—first to Abraham, then to Isaac, and afterward to Jacob,—to reveal those particular things and nothing else, and then say nothing more about them to anybody for four hundred years, and until Moses came. It shows how important Moses thought it was that his people should be thoroughly impressed with the idea that they had a divine right to Canaan, and this is the reason why he invented and shaped the patriarchal traditions as we now find them, so as just to tally with his scheme.

In this way he prepared the minds of his people to receive his great and leading and all-important pretence. But it was necessary that *even that* should be accompanied by something that was marvelous, striking and mysterious, to excite their superstitious notions, or they might not believe him. So he invented the idea of having God call to him from a bush that seemed to be blazing with fire while it was not consumed. Nobody else saw it. He was all alone, off in the wilderness. They had no proof of it but his word. But the story was so novel and wonderful it excited their curiosity, and was sufficiently

marvelous to satisfy superstition, and so they listened and believed. Then he unfolded what he pretended that God said to him, and particularly that God promised to be with him and help carry it out. Nothing more was necessary. This was sufficiently wonderful. It captivated their pagan hearts, and secured their confidence in Moses. "Surely," (they thought,) "God must be with him," and they were ready to believe anything he might say. The scheme pleased them. It tallied with their desires, and as God was going to see them through they had nothing to fear. They were transported with delight, and longed for the time to come to start. They could almost taste the milk and honey of Canaan. It was not a great way off. They could reach it in a few days. And then what delight to be free, —the owners of the land! —to sit under their own vine and fig tree, and enjoy the fruit at their leisure!

Little did they think of the sufferings and hardships they would have to undergo before they reached Canaan. Moses understood it all. He knew that it would require much time and labor to prepare them to go to Canaan with any hope of success; that it would be necessary to make soldiers of them, and organize them into a powerful army. His pretences were for the people, and were designed to comfort and pacify the

people bolster up their courage, and keep them quiet while he directed the necessary work. His actions plainly show that he was not relying upon the assistance of God, but was intent to have the people think and feel so. He did not venture to lead them direct to Canaan, but took them to Sinai, and there diverted their minds with his ridiculous system of worship while he organized them into an army.

This leads us to consider the most important of all questions touching the pretences of Moses, and that is, How do they stand as respects the True God,—as respects the question of right, justice, and morality involved in them? This is another and the most important instance where Moses has unwittingly furnished most incontestable proof of their falsity. As we have seen, he had no just, proper, or reasonable idea or conception of the True God, or any correct ideas of right and justice among men—not at all superior to other heathen. All his ideas, notions, opinions and belief in regard to these things were rude, childish, and heathenish. They were all shaped, colored and beclouded by the ignorance of the age in which he lived. He was a heathen, in a whole world of heathens. He supposed his own ideas of right and justice were correct, and he had no doubt but that God, as he imagined him to be, entertained the same views and ideas that

he did, and he therefore assumed such to be the fact. He had no idea but that the God he had imagined considered it right and just to select out and have a peculiar people, make them the special recipients of all his favors, to the exclusion of all the rest of mankind ; and that it would be right and just to cut off and destroy all the inhabitants of Canaan to make room for the Israelites. And he instilled those ideas into the minds of his people. Such were the prevailing opinions among men of that age. And Moses was in no way superior to them on moral or religious questions. All took it for granted that might makes right, and had but little, if any, regard for the rights of others, or any moral principle.

It was the common practice among all the other nations, on important occasions, through priests, oracles, soothsayers, etc., to have the will and wishes of their gods declared to the common people, to inspire their enthusiasm and devotion to a cause. But the rulers determined what their gods should be represented as saying. Moses undoubtedly had the same notions, and resorted to precisely the same means to accomplish his purposes. He thought it all right, that his god agreed with him, and therefore he did not hesitate to represent that God appeared to him at the burning bush, and suggested, ordered, directed,

and promised to assist to carry out that atrocious scheme. But his ignorance of the character of the True God betrays the falsity of all his pretences. If there had been the semblance of any excuse for it, any show of right or justice, any reasonable provocation, we might think differently of it. But there was none. The dwellers in Canaan treated their ancestors with great respect, kindness and friendship for more than two hundred years, and showed that they were a generous and noble people. They were pagans, to be sure, but no more so than the Israelites; and this scheme to cut off and destroy them was one of the basest, meanest, most ungrateful, detestable and abominable that ever disgraced the human race. So the ignorant, false and absurd ideas which Moses had of God, and of right and justice, and his own heart-cruelty; which are embodied in his scheme, entrap him and betray all his pretences, prove that the scheme originated in his own mind,—the mind of a covetous, unjust, and bloodthirsty human monster,—and that all his pretences in regard to God were false: That he was an imposter, and the great father of all imposters. The True God could not possibly have had anything to do with it.

But although Moses exceeded all others in ungrateful, unprovoked and inhuman cruelty, the ignorant ideas and opinions which prevailed

among men in his age might, perhaps, furnish some little palliation for him personally, *but not for God*. We must suppose and assume that God knew just as much then as he does now, and that he had the same ideas and views of right, truth, and justice then as now. It is therefore impossible that he could have suggested, originated and promised to assist in carrying out any such unjust and cruel scheme. It is inconsistent, antagonistic, and repugnant to his nature and character. And this is the crucial test of all the pretences of Moses: when it is pretended that God is partial, or that he has originated, suggested, ordered, or promised to assist in carrying out any wrong, unjust and cruel scheme, we may know, with unerring certainty, that it is false. He would not, could not do it. "Let God be true and every man a liar." The whole question, therefore, resolves itself to this: Is God ever and always true to his own character, true to himself? If he is, then the pretences of Moses were false, for they are entirely inconsistent and antagonistic to each other. Then, which shall we believe, God or Moses? Which kind of faith shall we have, faith in God or faith in Moses?

We have nothing but the word of Moses to prove anything which he pretends that God said to him. Does the mere word of Moses outweigh the character of God? Is the testimony of Moses

sufficient to convict God of the abominable crime of plotting and planning and employing him to assist to "cut off and destroy" all the noble inhabitants of Canaan and steal their property? Is the testimony of Moses alone sufficient to prove that God was guilty as a "particeps criminis," and accessory, before the fact, of stealing the jewels of gold and silver and the wearing apparel of the Egyptians, and running away with them, or playing double with Pharaoh? Can the testimony of Moses alone thus prevail against the integrity and outweigh the character of God?

I do not believe that God appeared and said any such thing to Moses, as Moses said he did, at a burning bush, *because* it involves and implies partiality, injustice and cruelty on the part of God, which are utterly inconsistent with and antagonistic to his character; and that fact, *to my mind*, stamps the whole story of Moses as a falsehood, and Moses himself as an imposter. To me, the character of God is much higher evidence than the word of Moses. The trouble with religion and the religious world is, that it sets Moses above God. Moses is believed in preference to God. The character of God has no weight, no standing, against the testimony of Moses. The word of Moses is the only evidence that is to be regarded. His word is conclusive, and to doubt Moses and his absurd pretences is a monstrous sin. Hence,

Moses must be allowed to charge God with partiality, jealousy, vanity, cruelty, double-dealing, petty larceny, and claim that he saw the "back parts" of his person, and that august Being must sit still on his throne, listen to and allow his creatures to believe all those infamous blasphemies, without being allowed to interpose proof of good character, or saying a word in his own defense; for Moses was boss, and wanted Canaan; therefore, God must not be allowed to say a word, except what Moses told him to say, or impiously presumed to say for him, for fear it might upset the scheme. Such is the ridiculous absurdity and fanaticism of religion. What kind of a doctrine is this for intelligent beings to believe? So, here, the question again recurs to us, as reasonable beings, which shall we believe, — God or Moses?

Who are infidels? The word infidel is used as a term of reproach by the followers of the two paramount impostors of the world, Moses and Mahomet, toward the followers of each other, and it is freely bandied between them. The Christian says, "You are an infidel," and the Mohammedan quickly retorts, "You are another." Both enjoy the luxury of having the same kind of mud thrown in their faces, and it is a pretty evenly drawn game between them. The Mohammedan has a little the advantage, in having by far the larger number and the most devout and

faithful believers; but the Christians counterbalance this somewhat by having on their side Moses, the great original father of all impostors. It seems to be agreed between them, that all who do not believe in either Moses or Mahomet are surely infidels. Faith in God counts for nothing, unless you take one of these impostors with you. You must take either Moses or Mahomet or, you are surely an infidel. And neither of these will shield you from the slang of the other. So all are sure of being accounted infidels by many, whatever they believe. But those who have faith in God alone as he has portrayed himself in his mighty works, and reject all impostors and false prophets, can well afford to bear the intended insult for a while. "Let the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain," ridiculous and absurd thing. The truth will find its way at last, and the believers in the True God will eventually be fully vindicated.

From what has been said, it is obvious that the desire of Moses to acquire Canaan for his people was the dominant and controlling motive of all his actions, and induced him to make such pretences in regard to God as he thought best calculated to stimulate and encourage the people, and at the same time inspire them with confidence in himself, and that there is no truth in them. His ignorant, false, absurd and heathenish belief

made of his God, to his mind, just such a being as he might use for that purpose. His ideas of God were the same as surrounding heathen nations had of their gods. He was himself a pagan, and educated as such. Each claimed their god to be the original god, and the greatest and best of all. Moses used his god in the same way, worshipped him in the same way, as other heathen people did theirs; made just the same kind of pretences of receiving direct communications from him as he pleased. And the nature and character of the communications he pretended to receive betray their falsity, and prove him to be an imposter. All his pretences emanated solely from his own brain, and could not possibly have had any divine origin.

A god that would or could from all others select out any one people, and such a people as the Israelites then were, to be the recipients of all his favors and regard,—even condescended to steal jewelry and wearing apparel for them, and order other people to be “cut off and destroyed,” to give place to them, would not deserve or be entitled to any reverence or respect from anybody. He could be regarded only as an arbitrary tyrant, who exercised his power without regard to right or justice. The world has no use for any such God. Human nature shudders to think of such a God. It would be impossible to respect and love

such a God. All the instincts of our nature would compel us to despise and curse him. It is preposterous to suppose that the True God can be any such kind of a being. Therefore, let him be vindicated from all such base aspersions and against all false Gods.

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## CHAPTER XII.

### RELIGION AND WORSHIP.

Now, I propose to inquire into the origin of religion and worship. Strictly speaking, religion has respect to nothing but worship of God. It has nothing to do with our conduct in regard to ourselves or our fellow men. That is a distinct and different field. That is confined to morals. It is true that the various systems of religion have adopted certain moral precepts, mixed them in with, and claimed them as integral parts of religion; that they were originated by religion, and that their existence depends upon and is sustained by religion alone. This is not the fact. They are only the sugar coating that makes re-

ligion palatable. Morals originate and spring from an innate sense of right and wrong, which is implanted within us as a law of our nature. They are developed by reason, according to the exigencies of society, and are designed to promote the well being and happiness of each individual, and the general good of all in this life. Therefore they respect only our conduct in regard to ourselves and towards our fellow men. Whereas, religion respects only worship of God. As it can have no possible effect whatever with or upon that great being, or influence him either to do or not to do anything, it is neither required nor desired by him. Therefore he has not commanded it, or revealed, or intimated anything in regard to it. It is a creature merely of the imagination,—nothing but mystic mythical mysteries—with no actual knowledge to found it upon, or reason to sustain it—a mere superstition. When priesthood tries to make anything else out of it, we may know it is working for its own selfish ends.

Religious organizations were originally devised and formed, and are now maintained, for the sole purpose and object of giving place and support to priests and their assistants. That cunning class has always devoted their energies to perpetuate the craft, and make it appear that their office is necessary for the spiritual welfare of the people. To this end, and to maintain and foster this be-

lief, they always exerted their ingenuity to involve and envelope the relations that exist between God and man in Mystic Mysteries, which they claimed to understand, but which nobody else was permitted to know. They claimed to be nearer to God, and to have direct, personal communion with him; and to receive personal advice and directions from him; and that all the people had to do was to believe what the priests told them, have confidence in their priests, rely upon and obey them.

In modern times all these Mystic Mysteries are supposed to be contained or concealed in certain old writings. Nobody knows when, where or by whom they were written. It is all guess work. One fact is settled. None of them were kept in the Ark, for when Solomon placed the Ark in his Temple, there was nothing in it but the two tables of stone. [I Kings, viii : 9.] But they contain so much pretended knowledge about the creation of the world and of man—such remarkable stories about God “coming down” at different times, and talking and advising with man, and such confident assurances that he had so much more regard for the enslaved Israelites than he had for all the rest of mankind, that he “came down,” and employed and directed Moses to take them out of Egypt, and lead them to Canaan; and promised to give them that country, and to “cut off and

destroy " all other people that stood in the way,— all which seemed so merciful, just and reasonable, and so *necessarily* characteristic of a *just, wise and true God*, that religion pronounced and declared those old writings to be the veritable word of God, literally true in every particular ; but mystically allegorical, in some parts, so that they do not appear to say just what they mean, and are not to be understood as meaning just what they say, but require interpretation by persons whose lives are devoted to that business, and who consequently are divinely assisted "to read between the lines," and so enabled to formulate such dogmas and doctrines as it is necessary for the people to believe, however repugnant to reason. In this way, the craft is sustained, by making it necessary to support a priesthood.

So the orthodox Mahometan claims to believe that the Koran existed from eternity ; that God has always kept the original, bound in silk, and ornamented with gold and precious jewels, eternally, close by his throne ; that Gabriel gave a true copy of it to Mahomet, and allowed him to see the original once a year. The Christians laugh and sneer at this ridiculous nonsense. But their doctrine of the divine inspiration of the Bible is an exact parallel to it—a piece of the same web ; precisely the same kind of stuff. It is like the polemic contest between Gymnast and

Captain Tripet — both supremely ridiculous, but well designed to sustain the craft of priestly interpreters.

In the exercise of their office, the first step taken by the priests, and as the foundation of the whole building, was to attribute to that ancient pagan, named Moses, divine wisdom, received directly from God, and a direct, constant personal acquaintance and intimacy with and knowledge of him ; while all the writings themselves, and every act of his life that is recorded, clearly display all the ignorance of his age in regard to creation and the origin of man, and show that he was as grossly ignorant as other pagans of his time, and that he had nothing above the most ignorant, childish and infinitely inadequate idea and conception of a Supreme Being. All his talk about God, and his descriptions of him, are purely pagan. He supposed and believed God to exist in the form, image, and likeness of man, —with face, hands, feet and “back parts,” which he pretended he was permitted to see, and that he was possessed of all human frailties. This was the idea and conception Moses had of God. And when we consider his wicked, cruel ambition (which is manifest) to conquer Canaan, to murder, cut off and destroy all the inhabitants of that country and steal their possessions, to assume or pretend that he, this pagan Moses, had

any better, higher, truer, or different idea and conception or knowledge of God than other pagans, or that he had any personal intimacy and conversations with him, is an insult to common sense. And yet, such assumption and pretense are the foundation, and *all the foundation*, there is for the Hebraic and the Christian religions.

The True God is too far above us to be influenced, or in the least degree affected, by any service we can perform or any worship we can render. Our attempts at worship are as if a school of ants among our sandhills, should assemble on one of their little hillocks, and attempt to pass resolutions complimentary to Queen Victoria,—*only* there is infinitely greater and wider difference between us and God than there can be between those little insects and the good Queen. Hence it is wisely said, in one of the best of those old writings:

“If thou sinnest, what dos’t thou against him? If thou be righteous, what giv’st thou him, or what receiveth he of thy hand? Thy wickedness may hurt *a man* as *thou* art, and thy righteousness may profit the son of man.” The necessary inference is, we cannot do anything that can at all affect God. We can neither do him good or harm, or increase or decrease his happiness or his glory. Hence, he neither *requires* or *desires* anything at our hands. As our

fellowmen *may* be benefited or injured by our conduct, the instinctive moral principles implanted in our nature clearly point out the proper field for all human exertion.

In remote antiquity, as our race evolved into manhood, the various phenomena of nature, the actions of the elements,—the wind, hurricane, storms, rain, hail, lightning, thunder, particularly the innocent thunder, because it made such a noise, earthquakes, volcanoes, spouting fire, famines, failure of crops, plagues, pestilence, disease and death, which they could not understand or account for,—appalled and terrified those early ancestors, and induced in their childish minds, first the emotion of fear, and then the belief that there must be some great unseen being or beings behind those manifestations that caused and controlled them. Sometimes they assigned a different spirit to each one. Bye and bye they began to think that perhaps some of those things might be sent as a punishment for something they might have done that displeased those unseen beings. Then, as children to parents, they naturally began to pray and supplicate forgiveness. Their prayers were, of course, thrown wildly into the air, addressed to beings that had no existence, except in their childish imaginations. Afterwards, they resorted to kneeling and abject prostrations which pleased earthly rulers, and, as they

reasoned, could not fail to please those unseen beings. After a while, numbers combined in these rude acts of devotion gave names and attributed characteristics to these imaginary spirits.

In process of time, some of the more cunning perceived that there was a chance to make an easy livelihood by leading in and conducting these devotional exercises for the people, and in their place. Then, priests, sorcerers, soothsayers, witches, seers, and prophets began to appear. They imposed upon the people by pretending to have direct intercourse and communications with those imaginary beings, and to know just what would please and displease them; and forms and schemes were then cunningly contrived by them to excite awe and reverence in the artless minds of the people. The priests, soothsayers and prophets *were facts*, but the gods were only *imaginary*. This is undoubtedly the origin of religion and religious worship. And from these rude originals have at length evolved all the systems and forms of the present day. The people have from time to time imagined gods of their own, or adopted such as others imagined, and shaped their forms of worship to suit their own fancy.

In early times the gods were numerous; all created by the imagination, just as the God of Moses was created. The priests, prophets, witches, soothsayers and sorcerers multiplied and,

imposed their false pretences on the ignorant minds of the people, who had been awed into abject submission to them. They pretended to know all about their gods—to have personal intercourse with them; to receive messages and directions from them, and exerted their ingenuity to personize them and define their attributes. At length, to provide for their own support, they organized systems of sacrifices, by which the people, taught to believe it necessary to do something to appease or propitiate their imaginary gods, were induced to contribute the very best products of their labor—corn, oil, and wine, and the best of their flocks, beef and mutton, without spot or blemish—all theoretically to be sacrificed and destroyed to please their gods, but in fact and practice to support their priests. The same plan was adopted by Moses, and seems to have been about the same in all other heathen communities. It is well worthy of its heathen origin. For how it could be supposed that any intelligent, really existing being could be pleased with such service is beyond the power of imagination to conceive, notwithstanding it is said, “The Lord smelled the sweet savor” of the meat that Noah cooked for his entertainment.

At the present day this great multiplicity of gods has been reduced to one, and Jews, Christians and Mahometans have all adopted the one

which Moses and his ancestors imagined, created and worshipped, in precisely the same way that all the other imaginary gods were created and worshipped. He is the same partial, jealous, vain, cruel God, having a human form, whose "back parts" Moses says he was permitted to see, but who in fact had no more real existence than any of the other imaginary gods. They have dropped the ridiculous system of sacrifices, and his worship now consists of fasting, prayer, thanksgiving and praise, addressed to the same being. Through all their creed there runs a distinct vein of belief that this God is a most terrible being; that he sits high up in the heavens, watching every word that is spoken, every thought and every action, ready to pounce down and devour us for the slightest fault, or keeping the score till a day of judgment, and then dooming us to everlasting torment. That for this reason we must live in constant fear, and that our tremblings must never cease. We need not be alarmed, however, for that is only an imaginary god; the True God is no such being. Of all beings in the universe, he is the last to be afraid of.

The God of Moses seems to have been well adapted for the use of scheming and designing men. After he was imagined and personized, Moses first introduced him to the world, and used him to carry out his cruel and bloody scheme.

Then he passed him to Joshua, who used him to instigate and sanction his atrocious crimes. From that the prophets took him, and pretended to have private interviews with him, and it is claimed that he inspired many of their mystic songs. Afterwards Mahomet used him for his purposes. And who can count the number of human beings that were slain, or estimate the suffering that was caused by the fanatics in that cause, claiming to act just as Moses and Joshua did, *under the direct orders and commandment of the same God*. Joseph Smith also took him, but he used him more innocently than any of the others, for under Smith he did not inspire any war or slaughter.

The Christians took him, and the holy Catholic Church, having full power and control over mind and conscience in applying its principles and dogmas, enveloped the civilized world in darkness and gloom for many centuries. When its head was crushed, as in the case of the fabled Hydra, an increased number of the same kind of heads appeared in its place, and from each of these others grew out, each one hissing some new dogma.

All sects and denominations have adopted the same God, and used him to promote and support some special object or design. Each has made a little different kind of an instrument, and now compels this God to play such tune as suits itself. Of course, all claim that he is the True God,

and pretend to know him personally; know all about him; just exactly what he thinks about everything, and what pleases and displeases him. They assume that he needs and requires their aid and assistance; that they are employed by him, and are working for him, and that their co-operation is necessary to enable him to carry on and sustain his government, and to advance his glory. And all this is true enough of the God they have adopted. He could not get on without them. But it is not true of the True God. He requires none of their services.

But these absurd delusions, mistaken, superstitious notions and ideas of God, constituting what is called Religion, first formed by and proceeding from an ignorant and childish age, inspired and promoted by priesthood, and imposed upon ignorant people, from generation to generation, by false pretences, have gained mastery and control in the world, and they now override and sway the intellect, and influence the actions of a large part of the most intelligent portions of the human family. These false teachings, in times but recently passed, have had their natural and legitimate effect. They have caused more trouble, more crime, more suffering, more heart-rending cruelty and bloodshed, than all other causes combined. Cruel persecutions, the inquisition, the dungeon, the gibbet, the rack, and the faggot, were its adopted children.

Inflamed passions, blind prejudice and fanaticism, ignorant and groundless assumptions, false pretences, arrogance, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, followed in its train. These are the fruits of a superstition that has long sailed, and still sails, under the name of Religion; and the world would be a great deal better off if it had never been heard of. It all originated from a childish imagination in remote and grossly ignorant times, and has since been fostered and promoted by the false pretences of false prophets, and by priestcraft. All kinds had the same kind of origin, and have been promoted in the same way. They are not sustained by any real knowledge, and have no solid foundation in reason. Now in Christian countries it is all founded upon the pretences of one man, educated as a heathen priest, a heathen among heathen, who described God as having a human form, and said that he saw his "back parts," which assertion alone is sufficient to prove that he was imposing upon his people, and that he was an impostor.

As long as it is believed and taught that God visited Moses and talked with him, so long Mahomets and Smiths and other impostors will attempt to deceive and delude the world with false pretences. And so long as it is believed and taught that Jesus rose from the dead, and that he will again appear on earth, so long we will from

time to time hear of his arrival in the person of some religious fanatic; and so long false prophets will appear to frighten the ignorant by fixing the day that the world will come to an end. Such doctrines are the hotbeds of false Christs, false prophets, and every species of fanaticism.

A belief without any knowledge, proof or reason in the existence of invisible beings, whether one or more, that exercise power and influence over human beings and interfere in human affairs, is the common origin of sorcery, witchcraft, religion and all religious dogmas, tenets and pretences. They all had the same origin, and have the same general characteristics, and one is just as well founded in reason and is just as true as another. This belief is a kind of mental disease. It comes, prevails, and attacks all sorts and conditions of men, indiscriminately, like a fatal pestilence, and has done so in all ages. Intellect, intelligence and reason are no preventives or protection. The great, the wise, and the good are just as liable to its attacks as the ignorant and vulgar. All are carried away with it.

The stories of the magicians and sorcerers of Egypt, related by Moses as *no new thing* in his time, and the witch of Endor, argue great antiquity for that species of development. So called prophets were plenty in the days of Saul, and he was counted as one himself, and yet he believed that

the witch of Endor could obtain more reliable information for him than the prophets could, or he would not have gone to her ; and, if the story is true, she could. The magicians and sorcerers of Egypt called by Pharoah were able to compete in many things with the sorceries of Moses, although (if he is to be believed) in the end he proved to be the most skillful. All this class of pretenders was patronized by royalty, which proves that they had for a long time been believed in by the people. Of course, their pranks were all delusions, devised and contrived by cunning and designing men and women to take advantage of and use the current belief of the people for their own profit. In doing so it was necessary to pretend that they knew and were on most intimate and familiar terms of friendship with the spirits they represented.

The only difference between them and the prophets is, the prophets assumed the distinctive name of *prophets*, and in their divinations used only the God which Moses imagined and imposed on his people, the "back parts" of which he said he saw. But they used the same kind of deception in pretending that they were on terms of familiar intimacy with him, and were honored with visits and direct communications from him. It is evident that the spirits used by the witches and sorcerers, and their divinations, were as firmly

believed in by the people at that time as those of the prophets, and they were undoubtedly just as true. Kings, nobles, and mighty rulers believed them as heartily as the pretences of Moses have since been believed. They all rest on the same foundation, and are on the same level. The only reason why the prophets inspired such severe laws against witches was, because they were *jealous*, as their *God was*, of all other gods.

Prophets, sorcerers and witches have all exerted their skill and cunning by their divinations,—some to make money, and others to promote some other objects, and they have had the address to deceive and delude multitudes of worthy people in all ages. They have enticed into their net not only the low, ignorant and vulgar, but millions of the highest, noblest, wisest and best of mankind. And it is all founded primarily on a belief that some invisible being or beings exist, that exercise control and interfere in human affairs. But there is not the slightest evidence in the world that such is the fact.

All the sacrifices and prayers of the Hebrews did not secure their occupancy of the land which, it was said, God sware unto them for “an everlasting possession,” or save Jerusalem. Nor can it be shown that any or all the prayers of the hundreds of millions of Christians that have been poured out for almost nineteen centuries, any

more than all the prayers of the ignorant heathen since the first man appeared on the earth, have ever had the slightest influence or effect upon any invisible being. The prayers and worship of Hottentots and all pagan idolators have been as much and as really noticed, recognized and answered as those of Hebrews, Christians, or Mohammedans. They have all feigned to believe that they were heard and answered, and that their various modes of worship were pleasing to the being or beings addressed. But in no single instance can it be fairly proved that any invisible being has ever answered or noticed any prayer, or manifested any sign of being either pleased or displeased with any form or mode of worship. No partiality has ever been shown or indicated. All have been treated alike,—the Hottentot equally as well as the Christian,—and that is, with absolute silence and inattention. This ought to be considered as conclusive evidence that prayer and worship are vain and useless. There is nothing in them. There is no foundation or reason for them, except to support priesthoods. They are a mere relic of the superstitions of a very remote, ignorant, and childish age, and as now practiced are simply a *huge joke*. As soon as it was known that the Czar of Russia was sick, all Europe fell on its knees and prayed for his recovery ; but to what purpose ? God's work went on just the same, utterly regardless of them.

As God has thus shown that the time and energy that are spent in prayer and acts of devotion to him personally are all thrown away, wholly disregarded by him, and at the same time has opened plainly to our view a broad field where they may be employed with great and beneficial results, it is clear that his design was that they should be so exclusively employed, and that is to promote the welfare, comfort and happiness of our fellow men *in this life*, leaving the future entirely to him who alone knows anything about it.

As the first step toward such a result, we should discard and abandon all ideas of the manhood of God, which is the height and depth of ridiculous absurdity, and has done more than anything else to enthrall the human mind with mystic darkness: for God is no such kind of a being as Moses and his followers have supposed him to be. He is not in the image and likeness of man, and has none of man's frailties. Then let the churches that are now devoted to a *useless service* be converted into temples of learning, where the "toiling millions" may learn something that is useful or pleasing to know; and let all priests and ministers devote themselves to this business, instead of harping upon Mythical Mysteries, which are of no consequence to mankind. Let holidays, *as often as one in seven*, be established, and strictly guarded by law against unnecessary labor.

There is a disposition and a great effort on the part of Religionists to have the present Christian Sunday kept and observed in the same strict and lugubrious manner that the old Pharisees were supposed to regard their Sabbath,—as a day for the keeping of which man was created. Against such views and practice, the good Jesus uttered one of his most pointed and earnest reproofs, when he said: “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.” It is quite easy to understand what this means. The present Sunday is not the Mosaic Sabbath, nor was it ever designed, authorized or intended to be substituted in the place of it. It is the first day of the week, not the seventh,—a different day altogether. The disciples, after the crucifixion, without any special design, held meetings on the first day of the week, as they had previously been accustomed to do; and it gradually ripened into a custom. They afterwards preferred a week day instead of the seventh for their meeting, to show their contempt or disregard for the Jewish Sabbath, which they claimed to have passed away with all other ceremonials. It was not selected because it was supposed the resurrection occurred on that day—that was a mere coincidence and they never attached any particular sanctity to the day. The early Church continued the custom of holding meetings on that day. They had some religious exercises

in the morning, but kept the rest of the day as what is now generally understood to mean a holiday, a day for feasting, social visiting and amusement. And we will search the New Testament in vain for any authority or sanction for regarding *that* day or *any* one day, even the *seventh*, as more holy and sacred than any other day. The fact is, the New Testament entirely ignores anything like a Sabbath, or any particularly sacred day. On this subject St. Paul, who ought to be regarded as pretty good authority, says, "*One man esteemeth one day above another, another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*" And so he leaves it for every one to do as he pleases, without ever indicating the least preference for either side of the question. And this is all that is said in the New Testament on the subject. After centuries, some innovators advanced the idea that Sunday was the Lord's day, because it was supposed the resurrection occurred on that day. Upon this, superstition clothed it with special sanctity; but there is no authority for it, even in the Bible, and no reason for it anywhere.

But it is of great importance to have holidays, the more the better. But to be of any benefit, they should be observed in some ~~national~~ and beneficial way. They should be devoted to intellectual entertainments, mingled with amusements,

diversions, visiting, social gatherings, and whatever may tend to rest the brain, lighten the heart, and promote good fellowship, good feeling and brotherly kindness among men. Also let societies and combinations be formed, to devise schemes of employment for such as need it, and at fair wages; and to carefully watch over all that are employed, to see that they are fairly treated. Search out and correct all wrongs, public and private. Particularly guard against monopolies, which tend and lead most inevitably to serfdom. In fine, do all that can be done by patient, self-denying, earnest, vigorous effort and exertion to elevate, even up, equalize, and improve the conditions of men, and so promote the well-being, comfort and happiness of all *in this life*, and that is the whole duty of man.

It is a common saying, that it is our duty to love God. I scorn the use of the word *duty*, in connection with the subject. Duty implies service performed as an act of servile obedience to some law or commandment prescribed by another person, power or being, whether one feels heartily inclined to do it or not. Love, like fear, hate, reverence, etc., is a purely mental emotion, which cannot be generated, produced or controlled by any external law or commandment. Love, as an act of obedience to a commandment, is not love at all. It is destitute of the life and soul of love,

and of everything that can render it of any value. Love that one human being entertains for another cannot be awakened by the commandment of its object, but only by the worthiness or supposed worthiness of the object. Love of God differs from that which exists between human beings, but is based on the same principle, and is generated and called into action in the same way. It is a spontaneous, involuntary, mental emotion of admiration and reverence, caused and excited to action by his excellent greatness and his ineffable perfections. When Solon made laws, he prescribed no punishment for parricide, because he thought it impossible that any human being could be guilty of such a crime. God has enacted no law or made any commandment requiring us to love him, thus showing that he considered it wholly unnecessary ; and that besides this such commandment would destroy the very essence of love. He wisely trusted that the great worthiness of his character alone was sufficient to secure and insure it. And this confidence was not misplaced. For who can look at the starry heavens at night, or, by the light of that glorious luminary that makes the day, survey the varied works and wonders of creation, or turn his attention to the structure of his own body, and the intellect that inhabits and animates it, without experiencing irresistible emotions of admiration and reverence

for the great author of all these things? It is impossible for human beings not to love God. And further, it is impossible for human beings not to admire and love the good Jesus, divested of all claim to divinity and the working of miracles, which superstition falsely attributes to him, for his real true character shines clearly through all that frivolous fustian a bright, pure, heart-glad-denning beacon light to the whole human family.

“Enemies of God” is a cant phrase of religionists, and they are profuse with their charges that people hate God. This all proceeds from an imagination diseased by superstition. It is not true. God has no enemies, nor does any human being with ordinary mental capacity hate him. Those that make such charges identify God with their own silly and absurd theories and dogmas. With them, those who do not believe in the divine inspiration and the absolute literal inerrancy of the Bible, as now compiled, hate God. Those who do not believe in Moses and the prophets hate God. Those who do not believe in the Immaculate Conception and the Resurrection of Jesus hate God. Those who do not believe that Jesus is God, which he himself did not pretend to be, hate him. Those who do not believe that he is “a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God,” although he never answered one, hate him. Those who do not believe that there is a great personal

Devil, a terrible Hell, and that God foreordained and foredoomed a large portion of the human family, thousands of years before they were born, to everlasting torment, hate him. This is all idolatry of absurd dogmas; mere fetichism. Ministers may preach it, and imagine they are making a profound impression, and religious enthusiasts or monomaniacs may rejoice in the belief of it, but the people do not believe. Science, reason, common sense rebel against it. They illuminate the mind, and that opens the eyes of the people to the ridiculous absurdity of all such teachings. There is nothing in them that tends to the betterment of or any good to society, and they are now passing and must all pass away,—be laid aside and forgotten as effete delusions.

It is claimed that the world is indebted to the revelations which Moses pretended to receive on Mt. Sinai, and the Christian religion, for all the sound moral teachings and principles that exist in the world, and for all the progress that has been made in the condition of society during the last few centuries. Nothing could be further from the fact. The absurd superstitions that were from the beginning interwoven with and adopted as an integral part of the Christian Religion were the prime cause of all the darkness and most of the crimes and suffering of the dark ages. They suppressed mental development, promoted

ignorance, and were the supreme barrier and obstacle to all improvement. Religion always has been and still is a heavy clog upon advancement. Whatever is inconsistent with the absurd and ridiculous theories and stories of Moses has always been denounced and resisted with all the fulminations and powers of all the churches. Only about three hundred years ago it was rank heresy to believe that the earth moved, and religion is still shaking and quaking over the developments of science. For science has discovered the most probable existence of many millions of other worlds of quite as much importance as this; that this world has existed many millions of years; and that man has lived upon it at least two hundred and fifty thousand years, and probably a great deal longer instead of six thousand; and moreover, that he was not created in precisely the same way that Moses speaks of, but that he has evolved from a most infinitesimal beginning, requiring millions of years to accomplish. These theories, so consonant with reason and probability, shatter the stories in Genesis into such fitters that no mystic allegory can reconcile them. They would all be suppressed if religion had the power it once had. But it has not. It has lost its power to enthrall and fetter mind, which alone makes progress possible and irresistible. All progress and improvement have resulted from and been caused

and promoted by rebellion against Religion, and reason has come out uppermost in the struggle. Mind is free, and Religion is obliged to submit. The only consolation it has left as a last resort, and to bolster up its courage and sustain a priesthood, is to hunt for allegories.

In regard to morals, it is a well known historical fact that there was nothing of any value in the revelations Moses pretended to receive on Mt. Sinai that was then new to the world. And after his time, and long before Christianity was thought of, and without any knowledge of Moses, what is to be said of such pagans as Lycurgus, Solon, Socrates, Plato, Pythagoras, that "heathen Chinee" Confucius, Cicero, Seneca, and hundreds of others, all heathen as they were, who taught and practiced, and by their lives elucidated, all the great moral principles? And how do they compare on that subject with the strictest Hebrews, or the loud-boasting Christians?

But although Christians theoretically adopt and approve of the prevailing system of morals, they have never been remarkably distinguished for the practice of them. Christianity has never considered the keeping and observance of the moral laws as of vital importance. Violations of them are mere peccadillos, easily remedied by a little repentance, fasting, living a few days on bread and water, or abstaining from a meat diet; or,

what is still more effective, paying a little money to the Church. They do not affect Religion. The chief, principal, paramount object and province of Religion is, and always has been, to inculcate, promote, produce and secure a blind, superstitious belief of, and a kind of fetich reverence for, certain Mystic, Mythical, Mysterious dogmas and doctrines, that cannot be proved or understood, combined with some abject devotional exercises. This belief, which cannot be dignified into a virtue, is the *sina qua non*, the one and only thing needful for Religion. This marks the distinction and difference between morals and Religion. Morals are founded in and supported by reason, and are of the chiefest and utmost importance, for the well being of society, but are considered by religionists of secondary and trifling importance compared with this *religious belief*. An upright, moral life, the highest development of all the moral virtues, without this fetich belief, is of no weight or consequence in the eye of Religion. It will not save. "There is no relish of salvation in it," no saving grace connected with it.

The requirements of Religion have varied from time to time in different ages, and been formed and transformed into different shapes by different people. In whatever form it exists, it is only a relic or remodeling of the superstitions

of remote antiquity. Among Christians, Religion now consists principally of a belief that God interferes in human affairs, that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and is literally true in all its parts, as now compiled ; a belief in Moses and the prophets, the Immaculate Conception, the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead, that Jesus is God, a personal devil, and the everlasting torment of unbelievers in a terrible hell. Of what benefit is a belief in such stuff to mankind ? But a belief of these dogmas, which nobody knows, or can possibly know anything about, but most of which are absolutely absurd and ridiculous, alone constitutes the soul and body, substance and marrow, of the Christian Religion. It never originated, elicited, or enforced any great moral principle of action as between man and man. On the contrary, it tends to produce laxity in morals, for the reason that that *Religious belief* is regarded of so much more consequence, and as the only thing that is of vital importance and necessary to salvation, while all merely moral derelictions are easily smoothed over with some trifling penance.

This matter has been thoroughly investigated and tested (and by religious people, too,) in a large community consisting of many that professed religion, and many who had no religion, including so-called infidels of all grades ; and it was found,

to their chagrin, that taking an equal number indiscriminately as they happened to come from each class, for general character and standing in community, for benevolence, charity, good deeds, good deportment, honorable dealing, and all the peculiar qualities that make a good and worthy citizen, those that had *no Religion* were far the superior. Such is the natural and necessary consequence of elevating such a superstitious and ridiculous belief into a position of such supreme and vital importance, while morals, everything that pertains to the welfare of man in his present state, are degraded into matters of comparatively trifling importance, violations of which are only venial faults, mere peccadillos, that may be easily atoned and expiated. Under the influence of such teachings the true believer may, as has heretofore been abundantly proved, contemplate and deliberately commit any crime, however horrible and revolting, with the perfect confidence and assurance that, with a little subsequent repentance, the *blood of Jesus* will eradicate and obliterate all the stain. Believe, believe, only believe and ye shall be saved, whatever else ye may do. That is *Christianity*. Mankind has no need or any use for anything of the kind.

It is high time, therefore, that the True God should be vindicated against this God of Moses and all other imaginary and false gods created

and set up by designing men to deceive the world. Saturn, Jupiter, Osiris, and thousands of others once firmly believed in by just as good and wise men as now live, have long since been buried in mythological story. The God of Moses is of the same kind, was created in the same way, no better than the others, belongs with them and must go with them. And all the absurd dogmas, doctrines and systems that have been founded and built upon a belief in him must also pass away,—be cast aside and mingled with the rubbish of antique delusions. And they are fast going. Science, reason, intelligence and common sense have all conspired and risen in rebellion against them, and they must go. For a little while longer Christians may be deluded with the idea of a “second coming” that will never be realized. The earliest believers felt sure that there were then living many who would live to see “Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” Nearly nineteen hundred years have since rolled by, and as yet there are no signs of such an event. Such delusions may last for a while longer, for of all enemies to the progress of our race superstition is the worst and hardest to fight, and the last to yield.

But all the elements of the nature which God has implanted in us, and all the circumstances with which he has surrounded us, while keeping

himself personally and the future entirely concealed from us, most clearly mark, point out and define our proper and appropriate sphere of duty and field of action. It is all limited and confined *to this life and our own race*. This field is particularly adapted to the cultivation of *Charity*, for which there is a broad market and a large demand, and diligent employment in it, limits the whole duty of man.

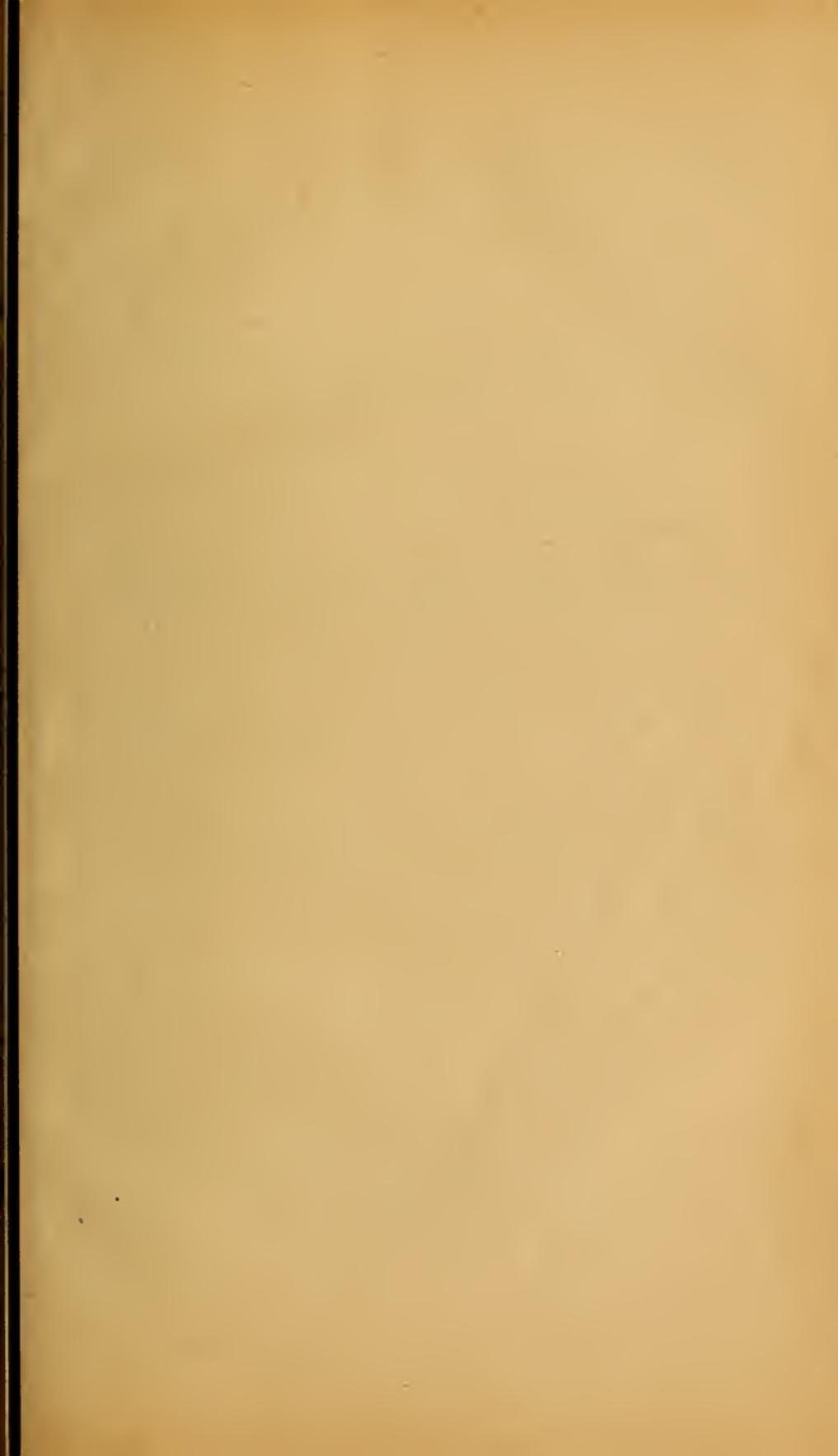
Therefore, laying aside all attempts to pry into the future, or impiously to encroach and trespass upon the grounds that God, doubtless for wise reasons, has chosen so effectually to close against us, trusting that he is competent and fully able to carry on his own government, without any aid or assistance from us, and having the field for human exertion so clearly opened and spread out before us, and our duties so clearly pointed out and defined, let all rally under the broad, streaming banner of *CHARITY*, and join heart and hand in patient, persevering, self-denying, and vigorous exertion, to elevate, even up, equalize and improve the conditions of men, and to promote the wellbeing, comfort and happiness of all *in this life*, and leave all else to God.

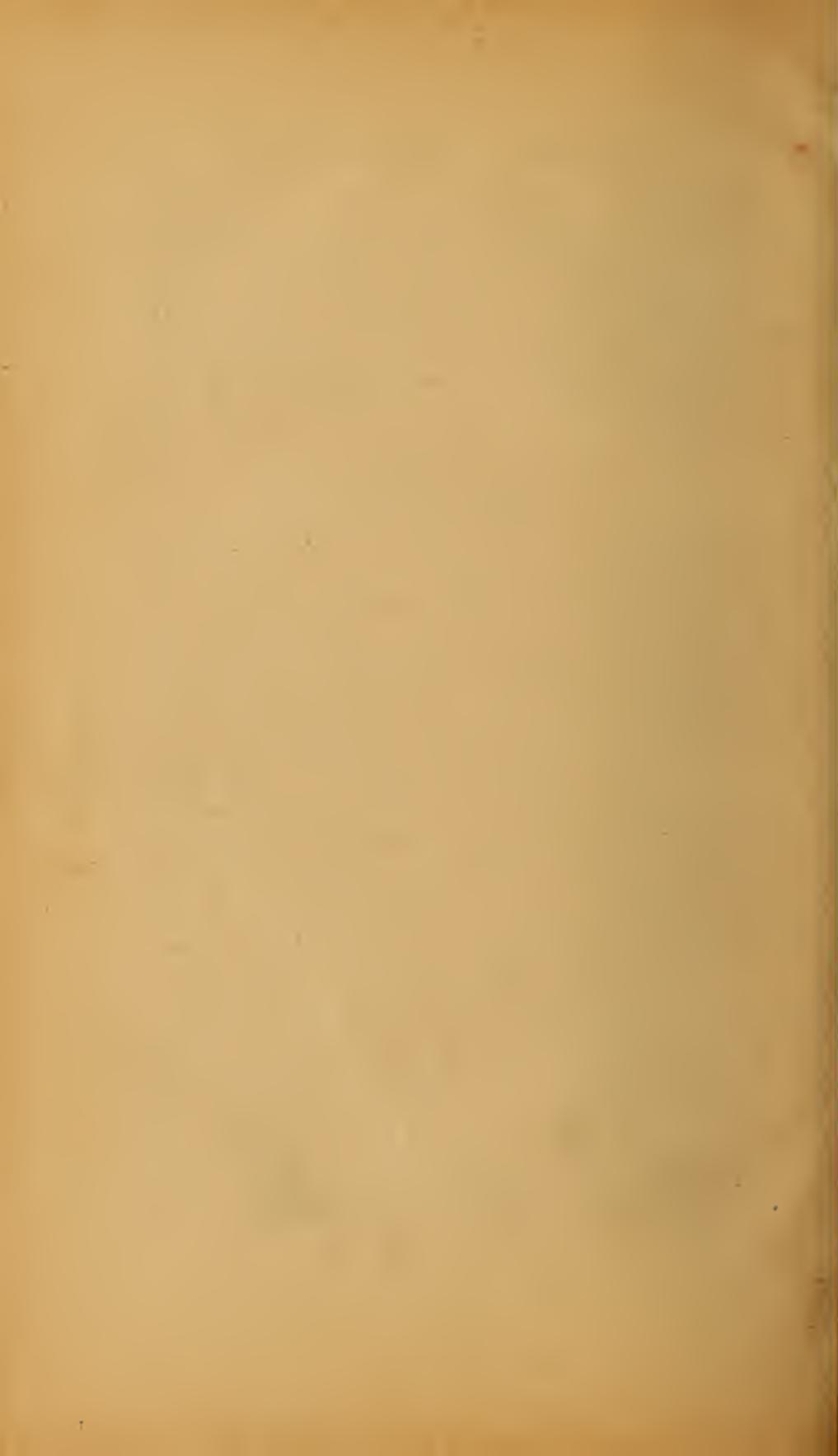
Whether there be any conscious existence for man after this life, or whether the soul, with the death of the body, at once vanishes into nothingness, like the extinguished flame of a lamp, it is

not given us to know. We must recognize the existence of a "bourn from whence no traveler returns," and from whence no knowledge ever came to man. All beyond is a most profound secret, concealed in the bosom of God alone. But although mortal eyes are not permitted to penetrate the veil that obscures the great Beyond, still

" *This* pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality "

which stir within us may be the true premonitors of our future destiny. Reason and philosophy encourage the hope. It may be, as soon as the grim messenger takes this "mortal coil" to his gloomy mansions, that the soul at once awakens to a new existence, and freed from all earthly entanglements is ineffably delighted with a personal acquaintance with God, and a better and eternally increasing knowledge of his works and ways. This is and can be known only to God himself, and it is vain for us to try to fathom the secret. Our sphere, and the only field in which we can labor to any purpose, is limited to our present state and our own race. But with all our duties to ourselves and towards our fellow men fully and faithfully performed in this life, Hope may plume her wings to soar above the bounds of time, and from a lofty eminence *watch* for the dawning of a more glorious and eternal day.





VINDICATION

OF

The True God

AGAINST

The God of Moses.

BY

GEORGE E. KING.

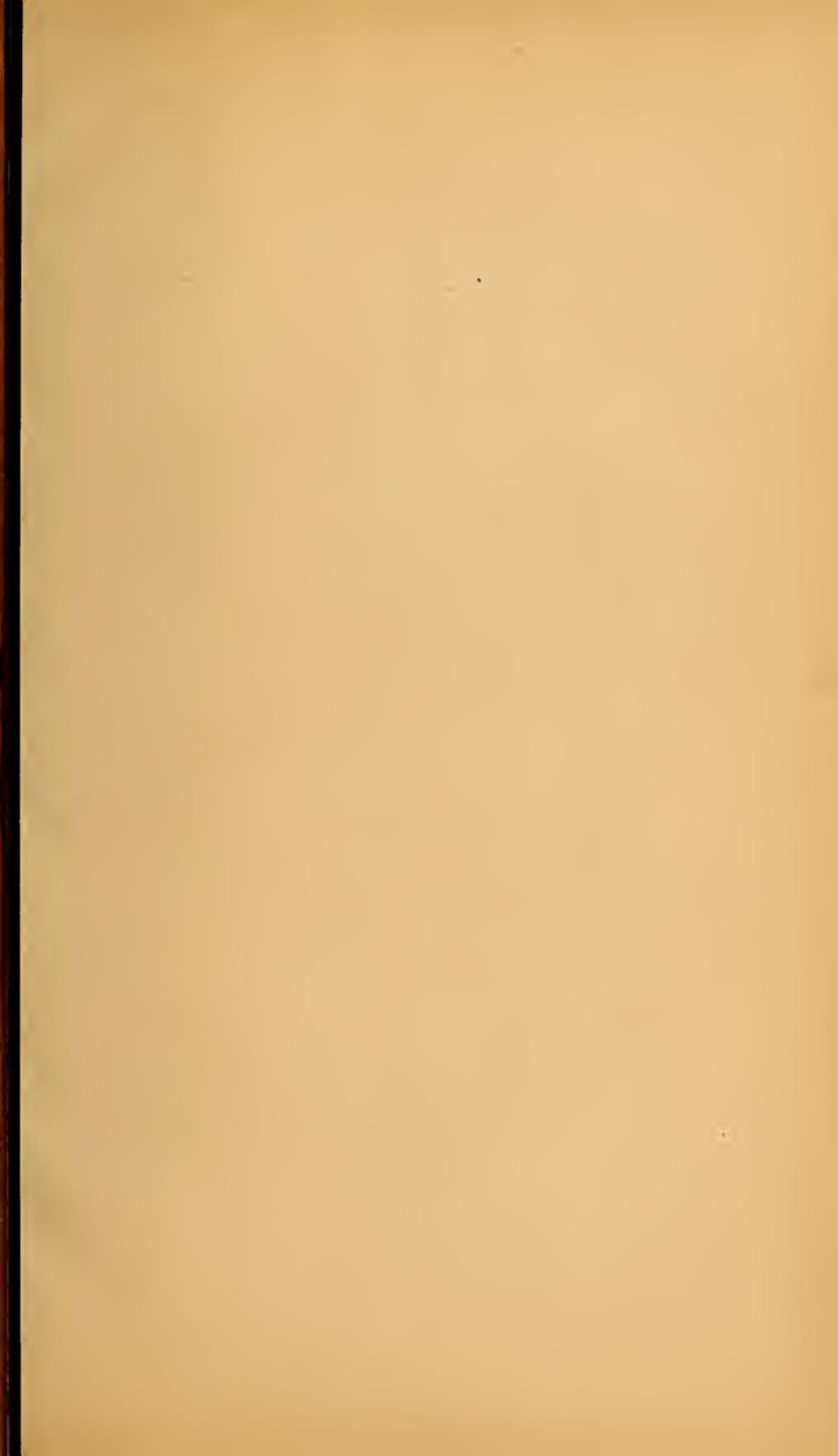
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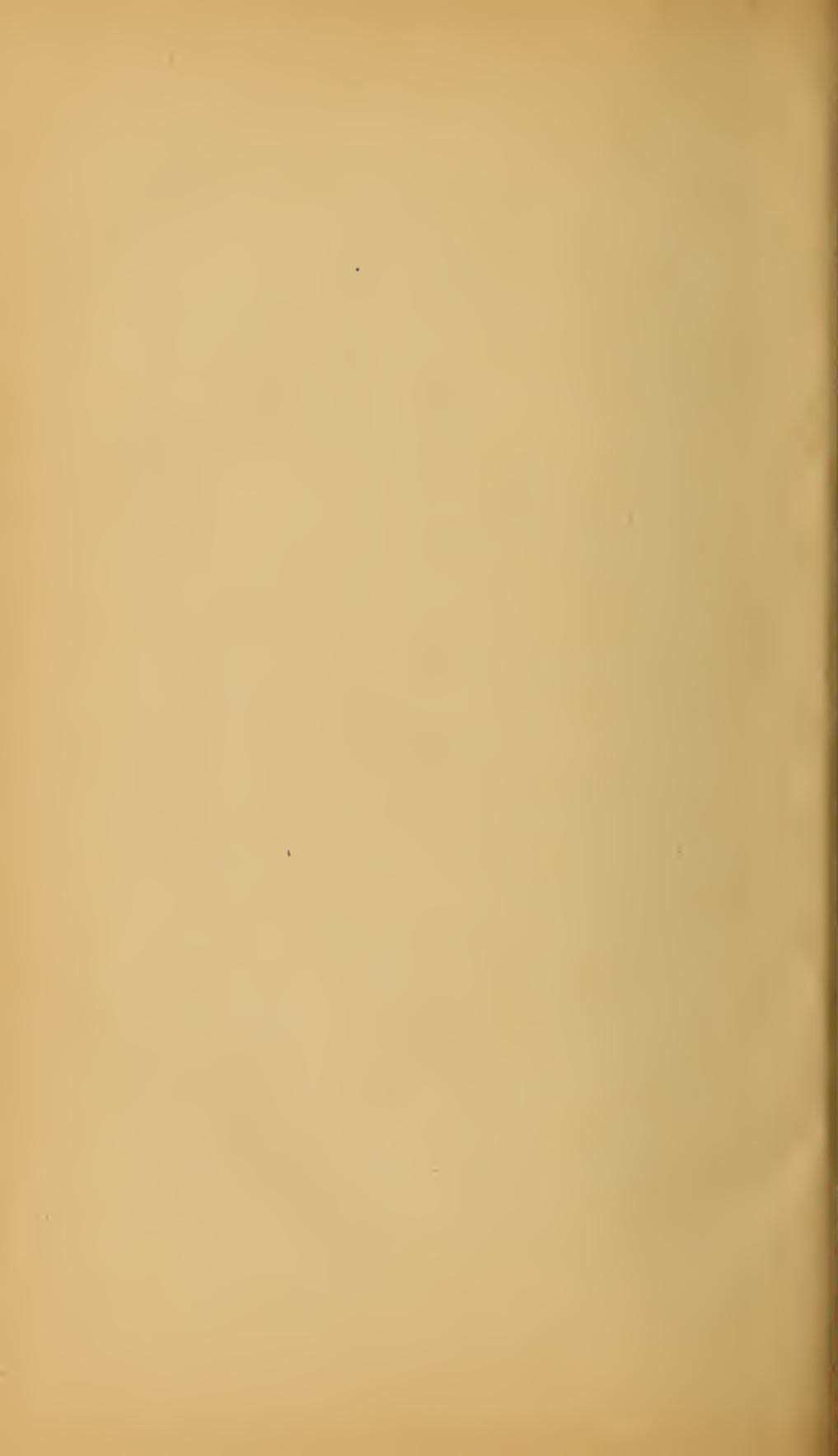
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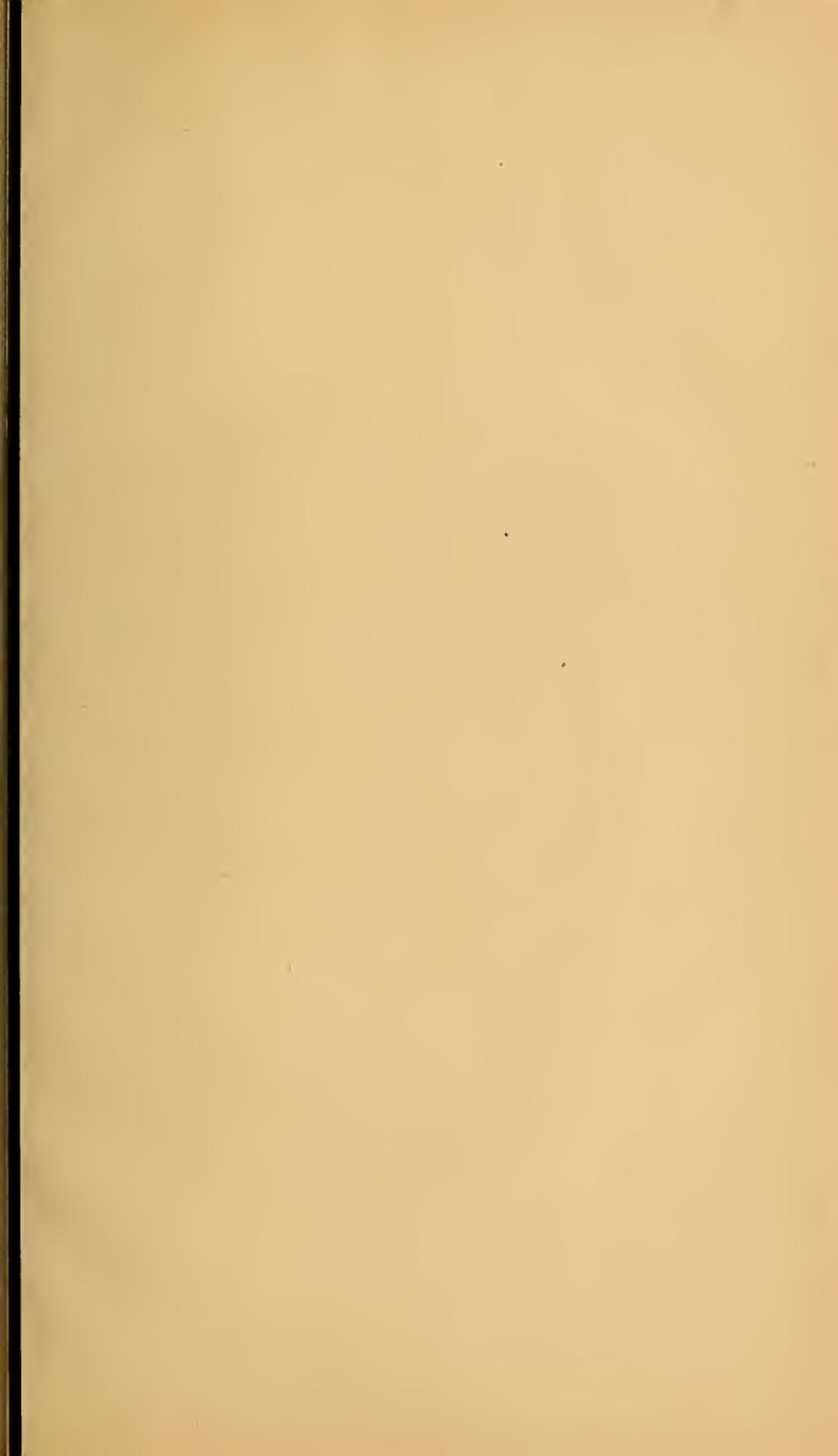
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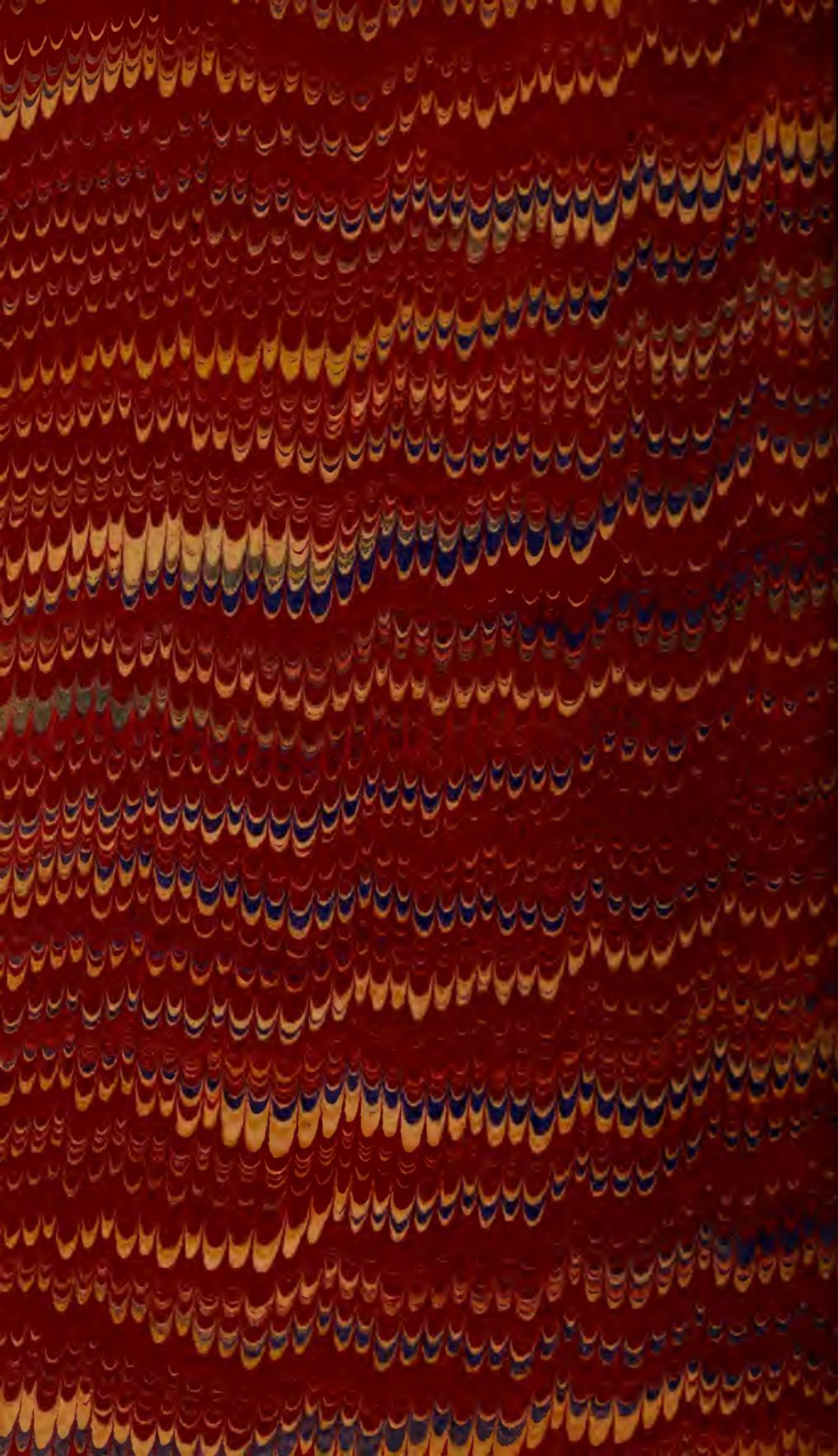


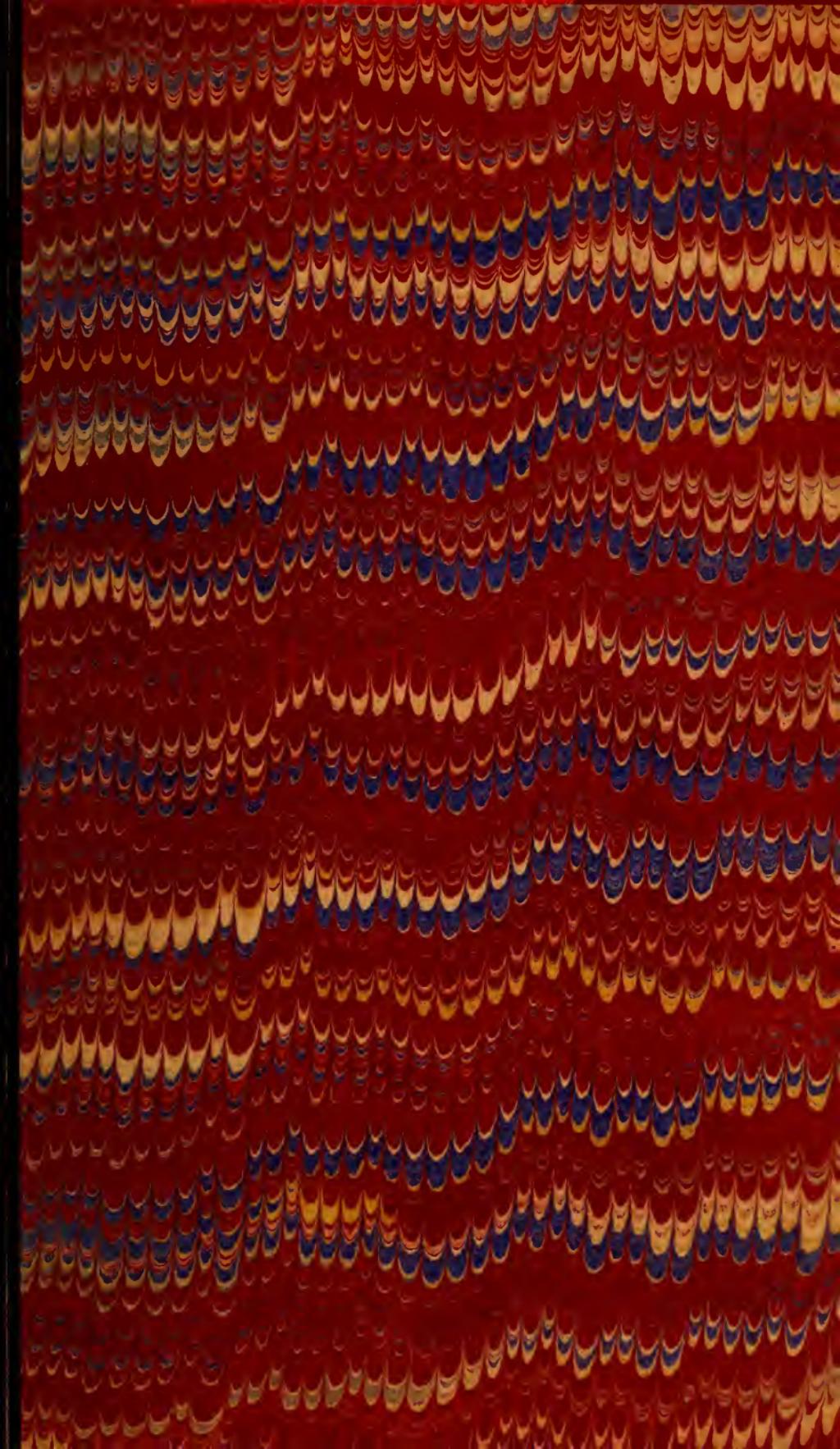






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